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IMMORTALITY

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BY

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EDITORS' PREFACE

The object of the Oxford Library of Practical Theology is to supply some carefully considered teaching on matters of Religion to that large body of devout laymen who desire instruction, but are not attracted by the learned treatises which appeal to the theologian. One of the needs of the time would seem to be, to translate the solid theological learning, of which there is no lack, into the vernacular of everyday practical religion; and while steering a course between what is called plain teaching on the one hand and erudition on the other, to supply some sound and readable instruction to those who require it, on the subjects included under the common title 'The Christian Religion,' that they may be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear.

The Editors, while not holding themselves precluded from suggesting criticisms, have regarded their proper task as that of editing, and accordingly they have not interfered with the responsibility of each writer for his treatment of his own subject.

W. C. E. N.
D. S.

INTRODUCTION

Many books have been written on the subject discussed in these pages. Some seem too deep for the ordinary reader: others demand more time than the average business man has at his disposal.

It is the writer's hope that this volume may suggest some simple thoughts to those who have little leisure for reading, and that this aim may form a partial excuse for a work rather different in character and standard from other volumes in the series.

Many lines of thought—such as 'Immortality and Revelation,' 'Immortality and Antiquity,' 'Conditional Immortality,'—dealt with fully elsewhere, have been intentionally omitted here. The work is, obviously, suggestive rather than dogmatic: the subject is one which, outside Revelation and Church teaching, soon eludes dogmatism.

If it be said that 'I have borrowed my honey, if it be honey, from other hives,' the assertion will

be a true one. A writer's sole aim in handling such a theme must be to help those who may read what he tries to say, and he must use the best means at his disposal to effect this result.

If it be not an impertinence to say so, the present writer has tried to write in the spirit indicated by Kepler's last words: 'If I have brought forth anything unworthy of Thy Counsels, inspire me with Thy Spirit that I may correct it.' As such assuredly is the case, such assuredly is the prayer.

E. E. H.

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CHAPTER I

STUDENTS OF THE UNKNOWN

have never been satisfied with this generalisation. Speculation has wearied itself for ages in pursuit of the flying problem!'—but the problem still, as ever, attracts.

Ignorant as we may, and must, be as to 'Whence,' no such complete ignorance is necessary as to 'Whither.' S. Paul's caution: 'I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep,'[1] forbids us to treat our 'Whence' and our 'Whither' quite in the same way, or to give the problem up without at least an attempt to know what can be known. At the best, however, we are students of the unknown; — only students, but still students.

In writing on such a subject, it is well at the outset to define our position. One supreme verse fills the mind: 'The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever.'[2] Much is revealed, more is concealed. God has His secrets as well as His disclosures. Revelation is a royal prerogative—a prerogative exercised by the great King as He thinks best. We find ourselves in a world of thought where the curtains are half drawn, and the blinds half up; or rather, we belong to two worlds of thought, the known and

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 13. [2] Deut. xxix. 29.

the unknown, the sealed and the unsealed, the secret and the revealed; and neither world is complete without the other.

Sir M. Monier-Williams says: 'Our difficulties can never be wholly cleared up on this side of the grave; our Almighty Creator has designedly surrounded us with a dense veil of insoluble enigmas, and impenetrable mysteries; we have been placed in a world of some light, and much darkness; of some clearness and much fog; of some certainties, and many uncertainties; of some fixed, and many variable laws; of some objects distinctly seen, of many wholly unseen; of some things wholly unknowable by beings like ourselves, whose mental horizon is circumscribed, and whose faculties are limited.'[1] And to this agree the words of Dr. Bright: 'Christianity must accept the disadvantage of not possessing a clear answer to some questions which other systems despatch *ex cathedra*. This trial is as old as Manicheism or Gnosticism. People who are disappointed with the gaps and reserves of the Christian account of God's *οἰκονομία* will say that Christianity falters. She must bear the imputation. She can but, as yet, see "in a glass darkly."'[2]

[1] Lecture in *Questions for the People* (1893), No. 14, p. 13.
[2] *Letters and Memoir of Dr. Bright*, p. 133.

God has his secrets for the present, as well as for the future. Thus, there are *Scientific secrets*—secrets such as the origin of life. The results of creation are being gradually disclosed, but what about the origin itself? That is God's secret. Or there is the law of growth. 'Why should the bulbs thus break out into flower, and leaf, and root? "Why," says some one, "they always do." Yes! but why do they, what is the motive power at work which thus breaks up the bulb! You say it is the law of growth. You do not explain it by labelling it: you cannot deny its existence, and yet, the moment you endeavour to penetrate below the surface, it eludes you.' It is God's secret. All theories of life leave the beginning unexplained. 'Every theory sees forces resident in phenomena, but throws no light on the question how they originally came there.' Why, again, did God take so long to create man? That is His secret. 'The earth had gone through a long preparation for man,' writes Sir Oliver Lodge; and, he adds, he did 'not know why it had taken so long to produce man upon the earth. That was a mystery, of which they could only speak with bated breath.' So with other spheres of thought. There are *Medical secrets*, such as the cure of Cancer, and Consumption—still secrets, but secrets which we

are investigating as students of the unknown. There are *Moral secrets*, such as the mystery of child suffering, vicarious suffering, innocent suffering—secrets of which we get partial disclosures, but which leave us still students of the unknown. And there are *Scripture-secrets*; secrets such as the mystery of the Fall, the date of the Last Day, the number of the saved, and such like. 'The secret things belong unto the Lord our God.'

Speaking roughly, we may say that God reveals facts, but conceals explanations. We are students of the unknown, and we must be careful to distinguish between the fact revealed and the explanation of which we are ignorant; of that which we are required to believe *de fide*, and this or that theory about it. The one is a divine disclosure, the other is a subject for investigation, speculation, theory, opinion.[1]

It is a revealed fact, for instance, that 'in the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth.' The revealed fact is all that either Bible or Creed demands our assent to. How He created them; how long He took in creating them; what methods He employed in creating them; what theories

[1] 'Hardly any one theory is all true, and many are not all false. A theory may be essentially at fault, and yet point the way to truth, and so justify its temporary existence.'—Prof. G. H. Darwin, *Report of British Association* (1905), p. 6.

about creation are correct or incorrect, these are among 'the secret things which belong unto the Lord our God.' We are students of His secrets, and it makes no difference to our faith if one student holds that the days of creation were twelve or twenty-four hours long, or if another student, as S. Augustine, believes that the six days do not imply a succession of time; or if another, as Bossuet, thinks that the six days are 'six different progresses.' What the Psalmist teaches is that 'with the Lord a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years.' All that Bible and Creed ask our assent to is the *fact*, and only the fact, that God is 'the Maker of Heaven and Earth'—a fact about which the best scientists and the best theologians agree. It is the same with the Sacraments. 'Baptism doth also now save us.'[1] Here is a revealed fact, and it is to the fact alone that the Church asks our assent. How Baptism saves us, how water and the Name of the Holy Three can regenerate an infant—that, at present, is God's secret, and we are not required to believe any particular theory as to unrevealed methods. So with the Blessed Eucharist. We take the words of Institution as they stand, and, as they stand, we accept them. We believe the fact that they proclaim, but how,

[1] S. Peter iii. 21.

and by what methods they effect that which they cause, how the Bread and Wine 'become what they were not without ceasing to be what they were' — that is God's secret. We are like Rembrandt's blind Tobit feeling for a door:— only groping, but sure that the door is there, and will be opened when our eyes can bear the vision within.

It is this principle that we must reverently remember in speaking of a future state of existence. We are told, thank God, to believe in the fact of a future, of an 'intermediate state,' 'of the resurrection body,' of 'different spheres of being.' These are revealed facts. But we are not required to believe, as *de fide*, unrevealed theories about the facts. Take one example—the resurrection of the body. Both Scripture and Creed demand our assent to such words as 'I believe in the resurrection of the dead.' But it is only the fact, not the method, which is presented for our belief. How the dead are raised, with what body they do come, whether this or that theory about the fact is the right or wrong one—these are God's secrets, and no differing explanations of theorists, scientific or otherwise, no varying or individual opinions have any claim on our finality of belief. The fact is revealed, the 'how' is a sealed secret.

God is great enough to keep His secrets until He sees that we can be trusted with their solution: He is wise enough to leave many problems unrevealed that we may exercise our faculties, head and heart, instinct and imagination, upon them. Some He keeps for the future; others we scarcely wish to know in this life:

> It is not well for life
> To learn too soon the lovely secrets kept
> For them that die.

'There is much of which we may safely and even profitably be ignorant in this world.' We know from earthly experience that the premature acquisition of knowledge does not necessarily premise happiness.

> Not fitting were it to the eye
> Always to look upon a cloudless sun,
> Grown blind with too much light before the journey 's done.

'We do not see enough,' wrote Sir James Paget, 'to form a final conclusion of what we see here'—and, *a fortiori*, of what we shall see hereafter. 'Who would think,' he adds, 'of passing judgment on the merit and plot of one of Shakespeare's plays after he had read only a scene, or a couple of scenes of the first Act. In this world and now, we follow a little, only a very little, of the mighty drama of

human destiny. We see enough to be quite certain that we do not see all. Dreary and wretched indeed would this life be if it were our all.'[1]

The mysteries of Christianity form one of its strongest interests. To own a religion which had no mysteries to be solved, to believe in a future which had no secrets to be discovered, would be degrading to an intelligence required for every other science, and would exclude from Christianity one great sphere of attraction which every other department of human thought possesses—the attraction of the unknown.

What Mr. Balfour says of the Incarnation is true of Christian doctrine as a whole: 'Unless it were too vast for our intellectual comprehension, it would be too narrow for our spiritual needs.'[2]

We may, then, seek to know something, an infinitesimal something, of the future in obedience to the Apostolic warning against an inexcusable ignorance. We may believe that only the first half of the saying of the great physiologist, *ignoramus et ignorabimus*, need be true. 'I do not know what we should do, we who feel the "burden of the unintelligible world," if we had not the hope of our ignorance becoming knowledge. I do not know, I

[1] *Theology of Science*, p. 16.
[2] *Foundations of Belief*, p. 259.

cannot realise, how the Atheist can endure to live in the face of things which we see every day. Unless there be a secret solution of it all, there is indeed no God whom man can worship. But the Atheist looks into the dreadful eyes of mystery and says it has no solution.'[1] It is not with us as with the Atheist. It is the province of Christianity to examine and to teach what has been revealed and what may be fairly deduced from revelation. 'The life of man,' said the Northumbrian Thegn at a meeting summoned by Edwin to discuss a question of religion, 'is like a sparrow's flight, which flies in at one door, takes shelter for a moment, and flies out by another door, and is lost in the stormy darkness. What has gone before it, and what will come after it, we know not. If the strange teacher can tell us, by all means let him be heard.' The 'strange teacher' was Bishop Paulinus through whose missionaries Northern England was first to hear the Gospel of Immortality, and the doctrine of a future state of existence. Something of this future state has been revealed to us, even if we see it but through the lattice-work which dims an open vision. 'Even to us weak and sinful men there comes a sudden flash, or mystic hint; the clouds open for an instant, and we seem far up in the depth of transcendent blue, to read in

[1] *Sermons* by Stopford A. Brooke (1869), p. 283.

a moment of revelation, the meaning, vaguely, of it all.' As yet, it is but vaguely:

> As one who walking in a forest sees
> A lovely landscape through the parted trees,
> Then sees it not for boughs that intervene.

These intervening boughs! How confusing they are! And yet they do but make us long to see beyond them, and the very longing has a meaning.

We may then become reverent students of the unknown; never dogmatising where Scripture is silent, never closing questions which the Church has left open, never counting ourselves to have apprehended the unrevealed, but never refusing to follow up that which is revealed. We must be ever humbly pressing on to attainment, sure that a faithful study of that which we do know will open the gate to that which we know not; ever following the gleam of hints and suggestions, and ever safeguarding ourselves with a willing retraction of any thought contrary to the known teaching of Scripture and the Universal Church. In this spirit alone can we reverently study questions 'touching the dead,' subjects such as 'Whence' and 'Whither'.

CHAPTER II

IMMORTALITY AND PRE-EXISTENCE

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Not even a wise man can answer every question which may be put to him, and we are not all wise. *Dr. Sanday.*

'WHENCE' do we come? Have we ever lived before? Is this life only one of a series of re-incarnations? Is death only one of many passings into other stages of existence? Such questions are being discussed in public, and in private, with a freedom which would have startled our forefathers. Not, of course, that there is anything new in them. They are as old as the ancient Egyptians; but a modern drawing-room Theosophy is settling the answer with a glib and offhand dogmatism which would be humorous if it were less harmful. The mere fact, however, that such questions are asked and answered, and by a numerically progressive section in society, makes it worth our while to ask them for ourselves.

Strange thoughts surround the whole subject.

Words and phrases such as Pre-existence, Metempsychosis, Transmigration of souls, are not without the fascination which always belongs to the unknown. Nor, when we remember the controversies which surround the rival theories of Creationism and Traducianism, can we dismiss the subject as beyond discussion. The old Hebrew belief[1] that we have already lived in heaven, that our souls were all created on the sixth day, and given into the charge of a Guardian Angel who guided them into their bodies at the appointed time, was at least a picturesque conception. It was not an unworthy attempt to explain the good impulses of bad men, as being the result of memories in a pre-existing soul-life. Most of us, indeed, seem to have had memories of events, and persons, and scenes, apparently wholly unconnected with our present state of existence. 'Even in this world,' writes Dr. Liddon, 'memory recalls circumstances, friends, states of mind, forms of thought, so different from those of which we have any present experience, as to belong apparently to a different life from our own.' Rossetti puts our experience into words, when he says:

> I have been here before,
> But when and how I cannot tell.

[1] Cf. the teaching of the *Talmud*. Dr. Salmon's *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 182.

Most of us, again, know something of the feeling which Mrs. Hemans described in those

> dim remembrances,
> Whose hue seems taken
> From some bright former state, our own no more;

and we ask with her:

> Is not all this a mystery? who shall say,
> Whence are those thoughts, and whither tends their way?

No doubt they may be largely accounted for. Actual happenings long forgotten, tricks of the brain, old photographs on the retina of the eye, unknown ways and by-ways of memory, will account for far more than we are conscious of. It may conceivably be that, in the language of to-day, our 'subliminal consciousness' may be capable of inheriting impressions received by an ancestor, which as a general rule remain in sub-conscious regions, but in peculiar circumstances overflow into the conscious regions. Or, these apparent memories may be attributed to the uneven working of the two lobes of the brain—due to fatigue, or an abnormal condition of the body. Who knows? After all the theories are exhausted, the question still remains: Have we lived before?

The Theosophist will readily enough answer the question in the affirmative, and will defend the answer by the unproved assertion that we go through a series

of re-incarnations. The fundamental teaching of Theosophy is the doctrine of the evolution of the soul by means of repeated incarnations, the condition of each re-birth being determined by the results, or Karma, of the preceding life. 'The theory of re-incarnation in the Esoteric philosophy,' writes Annie Besant, 'asserts the existence of a living and individualised Principle, which dwells in and informs the body of a man, and which on the death of the body passes into another body after a shorter or longer interval. Thus successive bodily lives are linked together like pearls strung upon a thread, the thread being the living Principle, the pearls upon it the separate human lives.'[1] There is, as we have said, nothing new about the main position. Herodotus[2] relates that the Egyptians believed that when the body perishes the soul enters into some other creature in a cycle of created forms ready to receive it, and that this cycle of existence for the soul is completed in 3000 years. Plato taught the same, but extended the cycle to 10,000 years. Buddhism, which Professor Max Müller dates as far back as the third century and Bishop Copleston towards the latter part of the sixth century, B.C., teaches that an ordinary human being must pass through hundreds of in-

[1] *Re-incarnation*, p. 8. [2] Herodotus, ii. 123.

carnations before he can complete his purification from sin, and attain the rest of Nirvana—and that the incarnations of one soul, with intervening periods spent in Devanchan or Avitchi, would take some seventy millions of years. 'Men die, but this is not their end: so long as sins are unatoned for, they must be reborn into existence. *Nirvana* is the full deliverance when the soul is destined no longer to *be*. It is that death which is followed by no birth.'[1]

Bishop Copleston in his recent work on Buddhism says: 'Buddhism does not hold that there is any such thing as a permanent independent soul, existing in or with the body, or migrating from one body to another. The self or personality has no permanent reality; it is but the result of certain elements come together—a combination of faculties and characters. No one of these elements is a person, or soul, or self, but to their combination the name self is properly applied. The death of a man is the breaking up of this combination; not the separation of soul from body, but the dissolution of both the body and of the rest of that aggregate of faculties the characters on which life depended. Life then is combination: separate those elements and life is at an end. If they never combined there would

[1] Cf. Hunt's *Pantheism*, chap. i.

be no life, no self, no personality. But as things are, there is at work in the world a force by which these elements *tend to combine*. No sooner has a man died and his life elements been scattered than they enter under the pressure of this force into new combinations. A new life is the result. There is a fatal tendency to reproduce life (it arises out of past action, and its name is "Karma,") and no sooner is a man dead than he is hurried on to some other life by a new combination. In Buddhist thought there is no permanent distinction between human life and other kinds or grades of life. When the life elements by which a man lived break up, they may reunite to form either a man, or a deity, or a dog. He goes according to his "Karma."'[1]

Apparently, the only thing new about the present day Theosophy on this particular point is its endeavour to prove its tenets from Scripture. This it attempts to do with strange twistings. Thus, the 'raising up of children unto Abraham' from stones is actually made to mean that both our Lord and St. John knew of the presence in the stones of divine monads which would be educated, by means of various embodiments, until they were able to assume the human forms. A text such as:

[1] *Buddhism, Primitive and Present*, pp. 71, 72, R. S. Copleston, D.D.

'If I will that he tarry till I come,' is interpreted as meaning that the Apostle should tarry within reach of the earth life, either for re-incarnation or metempsychosis, until the appointed time should come. Such glosses are very paltry, and raise a suspicion not easily allayed. They cannot, of course, be taken seriously.

But there is a serious side to the question. It is a side approached with intense and customary reverence by Dr. Liddon, who points out the extreme difficulty of reconciling a belief in a series of re-incarnations with the doctrine of a personal immortality. 'The doctrine of metempsychosis,' he writes, 'which seeks a relief from the moral perplexities of life in a new sphere of probation for the sinful soul after death forfeits this test of personality. . . . We realise our living personality as we trace the oneness of our personal history.'[1] And again he quotes to the same effect a striking passage from South's sermon on the General Resurrection, showing it to be 'contrary to reason and all sound philosophy that the soul successively united to two entirely distinct bodies should make but one and the same numerical person;[2] since,

[1] *Sermons preached before the University of Oxford*, 1865, pp. 117, 122.

[2] That is the argument used by Tertullian. 'We say that the former substance must of necessity return unto thee . . . because

though the soul be indeed the prime and chief principle of individualism of the person, yet it is not the sole and adequate principle thereof: but the soul, joined with the body, makes the adequate individualising principle of the person. Nor will any true philosophy allow that the body was ever intended for the mere garment of the soul, but for an essential, constituent part of the man, as really as the soul itself, and the difference of an essential half in any composition will be sure to make an essential difference in the whole compound. And whereas they [the Socinians] say that they grant that the same numerical person shall rise again though not the same body (the soul, as they contend, still individuating any body it shall be clothed with) we have already shown, on the contrary, that the person cannot be numerically the same, when the body is not so too: since the soul is not the sole principle of individuation, though the chief.' The whole passage is of additional interest as showing the mind of one of the greatest masters in our Israel.[1]

Dr. Mozley, agreeing with Dr. Liddon, is very

there is no mode of judgment without the presentation of the actual person.' And he goes on to speak of 'this Christian opinion as much more noble than that of Pythagoras in that it doth not transfer thee to beasts, more enlarged than that of Plato in that it restoreth to thee the possession of the body also.' (*Tert. Treatises.* 'Library of the Fathers,' p. 136.)

[1] *Sermons preached before the University of Oxford*, 1865, p. 122.

trenchant in opposing anything approaching the doctrine of metempsychosis. It is 'that monstrous corruption which preyed like a cancer upon all the belief in the soul's immortality. The doctrine of metempsychosis is an organic corruption of the conception of a future life, because it interferes with that which lies at the root of such a conception—personal identity. I am the same person throughout the whole of my life here. Eternal life is being the same person throughout eternity. But the doctrine of metempsychosis utterly confounds, at the very outset, this elementary notion. A man becomes several men in succession. But in this career of one person who is an innumerable crowd of persons, personal identity is confounded wholly, and so a future life at the root vitiated. Shall I who live now be the same person that will live in a future life, or will that person be different from myself? I cannot understand upon this doctrine how he will be the same person with myself; but if he will be different persons, I have no interest in the question of eternity at all.'[1]

Dr. Newman on the other hand seems to hint at a belief in the possibility of pre-existence: 'Every soul of man . . . has a separate existence . . . not only during its mortal life, but

[1] *Lectures and other Theological Papers*, pp. 31-32.

even from the hour of its creation, whether joined to a body of flesh or not.'[1] And does not Mr. Keble hint that the thought is not wholly irreverent in his poem on *The First Smile*:

> But did the smile disclose a dream
> Of bliss, that had been his before?
> Was it from heaven's deep sea a gleam
> Not faded quite on earth's dim shore.

Another writer will appeal to a wholly different class of minds. Stopford Brooke admits the possibility of re-incarnation, but dissents from the view that any incarnation is a state of being inferior to the preceding one, as it may well be in the Buddhist teaching. 'It does seem the worst of cruelties' he writes, 'if, having been at home with light and goodness, we are sent down to the twilight and selfishness of this world only to get back again with difficulty to the point from which we started. To have lived in the Imperial Palace, and then to be exiled to a cabin, into the dull windows of which glance only now and then gleams of sunshine we once enjoyed—that is a thought unworthy of a poet's inspiration. It is unworthy because . . . no soul having once attained such a measure of light and love retrogrades. The law of the Universe is progress, or, to express it better with regard to us—God's work in

[1] *Miscellanies*, p. 149.

us is Education, and Education pushes on, not backward, its pupils. If we have existed previously, we existed, it seems to me, in a state inferior to our present one, and we are here for further development.'[1]

So again hints one who will appeal to yet another type of mind—Charles Kingsley. 'Then you have lived before?' he asks in *The Water Babies*. 'My dear child, who can tell? One can only tell that, by remembering something which happened where we lived before, and, as we remember nothing, we know nothing about it, and no book and no man can ever tell us certainly. There was a wise man once, a very wise man, and a very good man, who wrote a poem about feelings which some children have about having lived before:

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar.'[2]

The whole story would seem to indicate the author's view that a belief in the pre-existence of the soul was an open question.

Early writers differ as much as modern ones on the whole subject of pre-existence. S. Gregory of

[1] *Sermons* by Stopford A. Brooke (1869), p. 279.
[2] *The Water Babies*, chap. iii.

Nyssa teaches that the spirit-world had been created before the work of the six days began. He holds that the souls of men existed from the very beginning of creation, and in a *determinate* manner—for this is the necessary consequence of simultaneous creation. Whereas Origen says that human souls had a body when first created, Gregory rather implies the contrary, and came to be considered the champion who fought for the doctrine of the pre-existence of *disembodied* souls.[1] S. Basil caustically dismisses the theory of Transmigration (assuming that he is alluding to it) as absurd: 'Avoid the arrogance of these arrogant philosophers who do not blush to liken the soul to that of a dog, who say that they have been formerly themselves women, shrubs, fish. Have they been fish? I do not know; but I do not fear to affirm that in their writings they show less sense than a fish.'[2] Rufinus, in his apology to Bishop Anastasius, after summing up the divers opinions held by different writers as to the soul's creation, finishes his comment by alluding to some who assert that 'God is every day making new souls'; 'while others again believe that the souls were all made long ago, when

[1] *S. Gregory of Nyssa*, 'Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,' Prolegomena, p. 11.

[2] *S. Basil*, 'Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,' p. 96.

God made all things of nothing, and that all He does now is to plant out each soul in its body as seems good to Him.' 'This is,' he adds, 'the opinion of Origen, and of some other of the Greeks. For myself I declare in the presence of God that after reading each of these opinions, I am up to the present moment unable to hold any of them as certain and absolute; the determination of the truth in this question I leave to God, and to any to whom it shall please Him to reveal it. . . . I, as yet, remain in ignorance on the subject, except so far as this, that the Church delivers it as an article of faith that God is the creator of souls as well as bodies.'[1]

So much for the theories of individual teachers. What, we ask, has been the attitude of the Universal Church towards the doctrine of Metempsychosis? The answer is a straight one. It has roundly condemned it. Not only has it been stoutly opposed by the immense majority of Christian teachers, but a formal condemnation of it as an untenable error received the general assent of the Universal Church.[2]

[1] *Rufinus*, 'Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,' p. 431.

[2] 'Whosoever says or thinks that human souls pre-existed . . . shall be anathema' (First of Ten Propositions against Origen), and again: 'If any one asserts the fabulous pre-existence of souls, let him be anathema' (First of the Fifteen Anathemas against Origen).

And what saith the Scripture? Here, again, the answer is made very clear by Dr. Liddon. 'The conception of a pre-existing soul is broadly at issue with the Scriptural account of man's creation. Holy Scripture knows of no creation of souls prior to the creation of bodies. . . . It represents marriage as honourable, and the offspring of marriage as a blessing from the Lord; but these representations would ill consist with the theory which would treat the human body, the product of marriage, as only a strange house of detention, wherein the unwilling soul is bound during a life-time far from its true end and home. In short, the theory of the soul's pre-existence is broadly at issue with the Biblical and Christian doctrine of man, which makes man the synthesis of body and spirit: since, according to that theory, man existed in his completeness, as spirit, before he was sent to inhabit a human frame. . . . The spirit can indeed exist independently of the body, but this independent existence is not its emancipation from a prison-house of matter and sense; it is a temporary and abnormal divorce from the companion whose presence is needed to complete its life. Would the soul permanently severed from the body still be, properly speaking, man? Would it not really be some other being? Our inmost consciousness

here echoes the answer of science. The body which has been so long the partner and associate of the soul's life, the instrument of its will, mingling lower physical sensations with that higher life of thought and feeling, could not be altogether cast away without impairing the completeness of our being, without imperilling the continuous identity of our changeful existence.'[1]

And Dr. Mozley, again agreeing, writes: 'The Gospel made the announcement of the Life Everlasting; no second mortal life which rises in birth and sets in death, but an eternal and unclosing day which has no night. Once does man die, but it is against the law of the universe that he should die again; that the mystery of an end should be repeated.'[2]

Fascinating as the doctrine of pre-existence is, we feel that it must be rejected on the ground that the Church, Scripture, and a rational belief are against it.

[1] *Some Elements of Religion* (1872), p. 116, 117.
[2] *Lectures and other Theological Papers*, p. 39.

CHAPTER III

IMMORTALITY AND REASON

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With intellect itself—with the thought of man recognising at once its power and its weakness, its vast range and its necessary limits—religion has, can have, no quarrel.

Liddon.

We turn now from 'Whence' to 'Whither'; from the question 'Have we lived before?' to 'Shall we live hereafter?'

At two supreme moments of life, at the beginning and the end, we are asked to assert our belief in a future life. At the Font[1] and 'in the hour of death,'[2] we are confronted by the questions 'Dost thou believe . . . in the life everlasting?' and 'Dost thou believe in everlasting life after death?' while all through life the Church bids her children daily proclaim their belief in 'the Resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.'

[1] The Baptismal Service.

[2] The Order for the Visitation of the Sick.

But it is asked, is the Church reasonable in putting such questions, in proclaiming such a belief? True, unaided reason, reason as at present informed, and bounded by earthly frontiers, does not go very far; but we have at least the right to ask whether there is anything unreasonable, or contrary to reason, in this or that Article of the Christian Faith proposed for our acceptance by the Church Universal. Further than this, perhaps, reason cannot strictly go. When we remember how little reason has to say to the origin of 'the life that now is,' we shall not press it too far in trying to solve problems connected with 'the life of the world to come.' We may, indeed, exercise our powers of reason and research in the one case as in the other. For instance, Dr. Charcot, the French explorer, has lately sailed for the Antarctic region, which he thinks holds marvellous secrets concerning the origin of life. 'The heart beats faster,' he says, 'at the thought we may discover remains of an extinct world, and thus bring back new ideas on the history of life, and the earth's organism.' We wish him success; but, should we not be claiming too much if we did more? He may, and we hope he will, bring back new ideas; but we cannot expect him to bring back much which will enable

unaided reason to solve the problem of existence. As Professor G. H. Darwin says: 'An advance towards an explanation of the universe remains miserably slight. Does it not seem as futile to imagine that man can discover the origin of the universe as to expect a house-fly to instruct us as to the theory of the motion of the planets.'[1] So, in regard to the future. We may, in thought, sail for the next world, but unaided reason must, at present, be content to go without claiming many clear-cut results. Thus far, however, we certainly may go: we may make a start, we may make a beginning. Though realising to the full our limitations, our attitude to the future need not be that of the cynic in the epitaph:

> Here lies a man who did no good,
> And if he'd lived he never would.
> But where he's gone, and how he fares,
> Nobody knows, and nobody cares.

We may not know, but we do care. Nor, again, need it be that of the dogmatists who assert, as with the certainty of knowledge, that after death the soul is 'past praying for': how do they know? Nor need it be that of Marie Corelli, who definitely tells us that after death we shall be 'forgotten handfuls of dust': how does she know? Nor need

[1] See Address by Professor G. H. Darwin in the *Report of the British Association* (1905), pp. 8-32.

we agree with good old Daniel Moore, who, in his *Thoughts for Eastertide*, preaches the dismal creed that 'the righteous are sleeping in the dust of the earth': how does he know? Nor again need we cease all inquiry about the future life on the ground that all we can know is the certainty that we can know nothing. We may, we must, use our reason for what it is worth and within its own jurisdiction, and ask what it has to say to the teaching of the Creeds of the Catholic Church. If we do so, we shall probably find that it echoes the conclusion of Dean Stanley (certainly no religious bigot) who writes: 'The heathen philosophers were content with guesses on the immortal future of the soul. The elder Hebrew Prophets were content for the most part with the consciousness of divine support in this life, and through the terrors of death, but did not venture to look further. But the Christian Prophets throw themselves boldly on the undiscovered world beyond the grave, and foretell that there the wishes and fears of this world will find their true accomplishment . . . To this prediction, so confident, yet so strange at the same time, the intelligence no less than the devotion of mankind has in the course of ages come round. Powerful minds, which have rejected much besides in the teaching of the Bible, have claimed as their own

this last expectation which founded its hopes on the events of that first Easter Day, when "life and immortality were brought to light."'[1]

However this may be, we may with reason suggest to ourselves two lines of argument in regard to a Future State—the argument from Analogy, and the argument from the Alternative.

Analogy. We may reasonably argue from analogy in favour of a resurrection and future life. We may argue, as S. Paul does, from the analogy of the seed, of life springing from the dead corn, and apply the same argument to the resurrection of the dead, though we must be careful not to press the argument too far. Analogy is not proof, but it is evidence. The uprising of the seed does not, of course, prove that the body will rise again. What it does prove is, that there is nothing unreasonable in the belief that it will rise, nothing more unreasonable in the one case than in the other—a case we see before our eyes every spring.

The Alternative. Or there is the argument from the alternative. It is the argument which appealed so strongly to S. Peter when asked: 'Will ye also go away?' 'Lord, to whom shall we go?'[2] What is the alternative? And the

[1] *The Jewish Church*, Lecture xx. [2] S. John, vi. 68.

answer, or rather the want of an answer, revealed a dreary blank. We may reasonably ask 'as touching the dead that they rise not' what is the alternative? What is to take the place of the doctrine of a personal Immortality? The alternative may be one of two things: Annihilation, or Absorption.

I.

Annihilation. Is, then, a belief in annihilation more reasonable than a belief in Immortality? Surely it cannot reasonably be maintained that a belief in the non-existence of that which exists is more reasonable than the continued existence of that which is. Only a very few serious thinkers would admit that that which is can cease to be. 'Nothing that exists,' says Professor Max Müller, 'can cease to be, since the idea of nothing involves a philosophical contradiction.'[1] Does not the mind respond to the belief which Robert Browning expresses through the medium of *Abt Vogler*:

> There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live as before;
>
>
>
> What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;
>
> On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven, a perfect round.

[1] Cf. *Lectures on the Science of Language*, Max Müller, vol. ii., pp. 378-385.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.

The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that He heard it once: we shall hear it by-and-by.[1]

There is a thought of futurity in the very origin of our verb 'to be.' It speaks of growth. Etymologically, 'to be' is 'to grow.' Can it be seriously argued in favour of Annihilation, of a state of being which is 'not a shred,'[2] that the conception of such a barren negative is more reasonable than a positive belief in Immortality, that Annihilation (which Professor Max Müller describes as utterly inconceivable except in the brain of a madman) is more reasonable than progress? Men of all schools of thought seem to have faced the theory only to reject it. 'I can conceive,' writes one, 'that at certain times, and to certain temperaments the

[1] R. Browning, *Abt Vogler*.

[2] *Nihil=nefilum.* Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, vol. ii. pp. 379, 380.

thought of Annihilation might be a real comfort. But the Christian world cannot endure it long. Hamlet plays with it, but cannot keep it. Either the dread of something after death, the chance of dreams in the sleep, or the nobler feeling of desire for more "life and fuller" intervenes, and we accept our immortal life with all its possible suffering rather than cease to be.' Apart from revelation, practical, hard-headed, Englishmen like Cecil Rhodes, have for the most part resented the unreason of Annihilation. 'He refused even to tolerate the idea of extinction,' writes his biographer.[1] Even a statesman like Robespierre asks, 'Will the idea of Annihilation inspire a man with purer and more elevated sentiments than that of his Immortality? Will it inspire him with greater respect for mankind or for himself? more devotion for his country, more boldness against tyranny? . . . The idea of the Supreme Being, and the Immortality of the soul is a continual appeal to justice.'[2] It is this appeal to justice which makes Annihilation so despairingly unreasonable. If everything is to become nothing ('which is impossible'), if we are all to be lowered to the same dead level of ceasing

[1] The Last Will and Testament of Cecil J. Rhodes, p. 189.
[2] Speech from the Tribune on the 18th of Floreal, 1794.

to be, there is scant reason for the present period of probation, so scant indeed that in many cases suicide might well be suggested as a really rational course.

'No scheme of life,' says Dean Strong, 'can pretend to justify the facts of life to reason so long as the present order of things is kept out of relation with the end. Life is not rationalised so long as it is maintained that the law of universal effort has no meaning in the next world as well as in this. It is no comfort to the man who strives while he is here, and strives to all appearances in vain, to tell him that this life and his own consciousness will be simply obliterated in the world to come. He wants to know that the pains he endures here have a meaning, that they are not merely inexplicable torture, but prepare him for a life in which with his own self-consciousness fully retained he will have power to act without the impediments which hamper him here.'[1]

Annihilation is really ruled out of court by reason as truly as by revelation, by the creed of the philosopher as by the creed of the Church, by the popular teaching of Buddha as by the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Bishop Copleston points out that although the strict theory of Buddhism is

[1] *Christian Ethics*, pp. 86, 87.

'that the goal of the saintly life is the extinction of existence, this plays but a small part among the considerations which "the sacred books" enforce. To the ordinary layman, the prospect is held out of an indefinite continuance of life in happy places. . . . Here, as in many other points, the necessity of meeting to some extent the demand for reality has made the Buddhist system better than it logically ought to be.'[1]

Whatever they mean by Immortality, the world's most strenuous thinkers,[2] Christian and non-Christian, believe in continuous being rather than in ceasing to be. Kant, for example, does not believe in the Christian view of Immortality, but he disbelieves in Annihilation—future existence being one of his three great postulates, God, Freedom, and Immortality. Spinoza does not accept the Church's teaching on the doctrine of Immortality, but he disbelieves in Annihilation—though he teaches that the reason alone is immortal. The most advanced Materialist denies the teaching of Annihilation; he denies the Immortality of the soul, but he asserts the Immortality of matter, no single atom of

[1] *Buddhism*, p. 152.

[2] Cf. Dr. Salmon's *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, pp. 608-614.

which can ever cease to be. The most extreme spiritualist believes in Immortality; he denies the Immortality of matter, but he admits and insists on the Immortality of spirit—spirit which can never cease to exist. Both Materialist and Spiritualist part company with the Christian Church, one denying the Immortality of spirit, and the other the Immortality of matter; but both reject the 'madman's idea' of Annihilation.

It is the same with the two great non-Christian religions which China and Japan have lately again forced upon our notice. Confucianism, 500 years B.C., and Shintoism, 500 A.D., however greatly they differ from each other and from Christianity, alike agree in denying the doctrine of Annihilation. The after life is as much the animating principle of a Shinto Japanese on the fields of battle as of a Christian martyr on a cross, or in the fire. 'Think,' wrote a Japanese soldier to his wife during the late Japanese war, 'think that our parting at Shimbasi was a last farewell, as though you had accompanied my body to the Temple; and that presently you will receive the news of my having travelled over the plains of battle, and entered Paradise.'

And so it is, of course, with the Christian Religion as revealed in the New Testament.

Thus to Christian and non-Christian the doctrine of Annihilation is a doctrine rejected as unworthy and untenable.

II.

Absorption. But there is another, and more subtle form of what is practically, though not technically, the doctrine of Annihilation. It is held and taught by those who profess to believe in an Immortality of some kind or other, but not in a *personal* Immortality : who believe in the eternal absorption of the soul into the Divine essence, or the universe, or nature.

Three of the most fascinating forms of belief, Buddhism, Pantheism, and Brahmanism reject the doctrine of Annihilation in words, but practically assert it in their teaching. Speaking very generally, they all three teach the soul's absorption after death—the Buddhist holding that it is absorbed into nature ; the Pantheist into universal being ; the Brahmin into one Supreme Being. Is not this practically tantamount to annihilation ? Think of only one of the three—Pantheism. Pantheism teaches that at death we are 'absorbed in the unfathomed depths of universal being.' In other words the Pantheist believes in the Immortality of the soul, but denies the doctrine of its *personal*

Immortality. What is to be our attitude towards such a line of thought? It is natural for those of us who sat at the feet of Dr. Liddon to turn to him for comment on such a question, and no apology is needed for a long quotation. 'Let us suppose,' he argues, 'that the metaphysical base, that the pure substance of the soul could be thus detached, even in speculation, from the conditions of its personal life. Let us imagine that this living but impersonal substance, this vague idea of a common fund of being, were abstracted if possible. Still, I would ask, is this immortality of Pantheism an immortality, I will not say in the ecclesiastical and biblical, but in the human sense of the term? Surely this impersonal immortality is only another term for Annihilation. Just as God's existence is practically denied by the denial of His Personality, so, immortality of the soul is denied by the philosophy which strips from it all that gives unity, identity, consciousness to our existence, and which asserts certainly the continuity of something, of some substance or being, vague and indeterminate, of something which may hereafter be pointed to as having been once myself, but which I can as little hope ever to recognise for such as anything else in nature. At least it is impossible to feel any practical interest in a destiny so purely meta-

physical and abstract. The immortality of the personal soul, with its own history of thought, love, action, struggles, sufferings, with its own enduring consciousness, with its peculiar physiognomy original and acquired, recognised by others without, before God within, is denied by Pantheism. And when this is generally understood, a few phrases do not check the advance of the common sense of Mankind, and we proclaim here a virtual denial of the immortality of the soul.'[1] There is no more comfort in a belief in absorption than in annihilation. 'If the end of all is to be absorption, life is merely a disordered delirium which precedes a dreamless sleep. Such a hope supplies no true justification to any one, and it attracts no one but the world-weary, and these it kills rather than cures.'

The fifteen Anathemas against Origen exhibit the mind of the Church. Anathema XIV. runs, 'If any one shall say that all reasonable beings will one day be united in one . . . let him be Anathema.'

Surely, it is doing Reason no wrong if we assert that she rejects both such alternatives as Annihilation and Absorption, but rather assents to the doctrine of the Universal Church, to the teaching

[1] *University Sermons*, 1865, pp. 112-113.

of the best minds of the best ages, viz. 'that the dead live in the unfolded sameness of personal identity, and that that means, and means only, a *personal* immortality.' The more closely, and the more fearlessly we study the subject, the more clearly are we convinced of the reasonableness of a Revelation which bids us believe that God cannot be the God of a being who does not exist.[1]

[1] Cf. S. Luke, xx. 38.

CHAPTER IV

IMMORTALITY AND INSTINCT

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IMMORTALITY AND INSTINCT

It is only the instinct of immortality which makes us spend our lives in toils and dangers. *Cicero.*

I.—The Personal Instinct: Plus Ultra

But reason is not everything. What has instinct to teach us about the doctrine of Immortality?

Quite apart from Religion, wholly irrespective of Revelation, 'there is in man that which whispers to him in his better moments that all does not end in death. And thus it may be said that man *feels* his Immortality, that on this, as on other points, the aberrations of reason are corrected by those irrepressible instincts of soul, which are beyond reason, and which we vaguely describe as feeling.' Socrates expresses this instinct in his contention, 'When I have drunk of the poison, I shall no longer remain with you, but shall pass to some happy state of the departed.' Cicero does the same

in his argument that 'it is only the instinct of immortality that makes us spend our lives in toils and dangers.' Tennyson's experience: 'I feel that the dead live, whatever pseudo-savants say,' was part of the same universal instinct. Queen Victoria writes of Tennyson, 'He talked of the many friends he had lost, and what it would be if he did not know and feel there was another world . . . and then he spoke with horror of the unbelievers . . . who would make you believe there was no immortality, who tried to explain away all in a miserable manner. We agreed that, were such a thing possible, God, who is love, would be far more cruel than any human being.'[1]

The instinct is world-wide, and as Sir James Paget wrote: 'I doubt whether there be any instance of a fallacy which has resisted for centuries the force of controversy,'[2]—or, as Cecil Rhodes said: 'Surely the universal instinct of the race has something to justify it.' The practical universality of the instinct is a strong testimony to its truth. There are, of course, those who assert, rather perhaps than believe, that 'man's higher being is but the vitality of his animal frame, and perishes with it, perishes utterly, and for ever, but this does not really satisfy man. Why should men be haunted,

[1] *Life of Tennyson*, p. 457. [2] *Theology and Science*, p. 25.

and possessed as they are by the idea, by the instinct, of some coming Immortality? Why should this idea be so general, or so importunate as upon the whole it undoubtedly is? Why should such a hope, such an apprehension, such a presentiment—call it what you will—of an existence after death be as deep, and almost universal as it is? A superstition, which has no basis in fact, has its limits in time, and territorial sway. But, whenever man has risen above the lower stages of an animalised life, the idea of a future, in some instinctive way at least, has dawned upon him if only as correlative to the idea of God.'[1]

Thoughtful minds have again and again recognised this instinct or feeling, and have admitted it as a link in the chain of evidence dealing with Immortality. A fine passage from Dr. Mozley will make its own suggestions. 'When anything beautiful in human character takes its departure from the world, what is the first ejaculation of the human heart but one for its Immortality? Can it perish, the priceless treasure of this personal life? The survivor says, "No," such being must go on being. He pursues the sacred form through unimaginable worlds—even the bodily form; for even the body is spiritual so far as it is a manifestation

[1] Sermon preached in S. Paul's Cathedral by Dr. Liddon, 1872.

of personal being; and he *feels* that, though carried away and shrouded in the mist which encircles human existence, it is safe somewhere.'

This instinct, this belief, is not the product of Christianity, though it is consecrated by it. The instinct of the pre-Christian is at one with that of the Christian world. Think of a soldier's funeral. There, in that long procession of military mourners may be seen a soldier's horse. It is the dead officer's charger, with empty saddle, following his master to the grave. What does it mean? Why is it there? The ritual of it carries us back in thought to pre-Christian days when the dead warrior's horse was taken to the grave and there put to death in the belief, the purely pagan belief, that its master in some future state would want his horse to ride in the Fields of the Blessed. Very primitive, very crude, you may say. Yes! But at least it testifies, in pathetic ceremonial, to the instinct, inherent in man ages before the Gospel brought Immortality to light, that the spirits of the dead do live.

Again, think of the Blessed Dead. We place flowers on their graves. Why? We are, unconsciously perhaps, Christianising the old heathen instinct that the spirits of the dead visit their graves, or live in the scent of the flowers, or that

the flowers placed there will give them pleasure. A childish belief, perhaps (though possibly none the less true for that); but at least it bears witness to the true instinct of the old Heathen world that the dead are alive. Or again, think of some German village. Enter some peasant cottage, and see the 'soul-house' being prepared for burial. Part of the ceremony will consist in placing a pair of shoes upon the feet of the Departed. Why do they do it? Because in their simple way, these German peasants are carrying on the custom of the old pre-Christian Northmen who provided their dead with shoes under the belief that they were to travel a long and dangerous journey to their rest and enjoyment in spirit-land. Go in thought to Brittany on All-Souls' night, and you will find a fire left burning after all have gone to rest and a table spread with food. Why? Because those simple Bretons believe that on that night, of all nights in the year, the spirits of their Dead will visit the house in which they lived, and should be welcomed in a way which was then, as it is now, the outward symbol of friendship and hospitality. You may smile if you will at the crudeness of such conceptions (though their crudeness does not disprove their truth); but they tell of the universal instinct of old pre-Christian days—the instinct of

man, as man, that the spirits of the Dead do live, that 'the thinking turbulent thing which each man calls *himself* must needs live on.' I am well convinced, says the non-Christian Cicero, 'that my dear departed friends . . . are so far from having ceased to live, that the state they now enjoy can alone with propriety be called life . . . I feel a conscious conviction that this active comprehensive principle (the soul) cannot possibly be of a mortal nature.'

And the instinct of Christianity has confirmed and consecrated the belief which pre-Christian instinct had proclaimed. Think, for instance, of a well-known scene in the garden of the ancient Moorish palace of the kings of Spain. See Charles v., at the zenith of his greatness, ruler of that Spain which ruled the world. He enters a pavilion in the garden, a pavilion covered with tiles, on each of which he has inscribed the motto *Plus Ultra*, 'more beyond,' more worlds to conquer. Change the scene to San Juste, and change the meaning of the motto. The Emperor has fled from Innsbruck, the Empire is practically dismembered, and Charles has retired from the world. In a room from which he could see the High Altar of the Monastery Chapel, and daily assist at the Holy Sacrifice, he lives and dies in the hope expressed and trans-

figured by his motto, *Plus Ultra*: 'More beyond.' He has learnt that this world is not all: there is more beyond.

God has, as a matter of fact, implanted in us all an instinct, at one with Revelation and Reason, which makes 'everlasting life after death' part of our natural as well as of our supernatural belief. Our personal instinct, as well as reason, bids us to hope for 'the life of the world to come.'

But there is something more than a personal instinct that we have to consider. Instinct is social as well as personal, and, as we shall see, man's social instinct demands a belief in Immortality.

CHAPTER V

IMMORTALITY AND INSTINCT

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IMMORTALITY AND INSTINCT

The Christian hope of immortality cannot be an egotistic hope: it is in itself social. *Mozley.*

II.—The Social Instinct: The Communion of Saints

We have seen that a universal instinct is in touch with the doctrine of a personal Immortality. But instinct is not only individualistic, it is social. It suggests a social aspect of Immortality, an Immortality for another as well as for oneself. 'The instinct of Immortality,' writes Dr. Mozley, 'is not a selfish instinct, it is not a neutral one, it is a moral and generous one. The individual desires the Immortality, the perpetuation, the regeneration, the ascent, and the glory of that human Society with which he finds himself connected now, and aspires after membership with the great community in its state of exaltation. Christianity knows nothing of

a state of an individual Immortality alone, but only of a glorious hope for the individual in the Body, in the eternal Society of the Church Triumphant. The Christian hope of Immortality cannot be an egotistic hope . . . it is in its very essence social.'[1] Principal Caird, in commenting on Hebrew xi. 39, 40, points out that the imperfection which the writer ascribes to individual lives arises necessarily from this: that it constitutes the very grandeur and nobleness of human life to be incapable of a purely individual perfection, and that each successive generation can say of the men and ages that are past, 'They without us could not be made perfect.' Individual happiness, individual perfection, are never attained. It is, indeed, the very greatness and glory of man's nature that it is incapable of it.[2] To think of Immortality for oneself apart from others would be an absurdity. 'It would be a false description, as we should say of any physical instinct which was wrongly described in a book of natural philosophy. The two desires, for one's own and another's Immortality, are in fact bound up with each other in one affection, and make but one affection between them. This affection is essentially not a lonely one; no human being

[1] Mozley's *University Sermons*, p. 70.
[2] Caird's *University Sermons*, p. 181.

ever desired a future life for himself alone.'[1] 'They, without us' are of necessity in a state of imperfection—'as musicians speak of the imperfection of chords without certain notes required for their completion or resolution, though the separate notes in either melody or harmony are not themselves faultful or painful.'

A belief in the Communion of Saints is the outcome of this social instinct, confirmed and consecrated by the Christian Faith. The Early Church in commemorating the Departed ever set us a happy example in emphasising the social side of the great Brotherhood. 'She never forgot the brother departed, nor deemed him severed from her fellowship, or less a brother than before. She fostered the Departed in her memory, and wrote their names in her book, and whensoever the Saints that were still left on earth met together in the Communion of the Holy Eucharist, she read aloud the names of the departed as bidding them to their wonted place in Choir. She knew (as she still knows) that while she tarried praying without, they were but within the precinct of an inner Court, nearer the Eternal Throne.'[2]

In the Communion of Saints, the Church Militant, at Rest, Triumphant, is one.

[1] Mozley's *University Sermons*, p. 68.
[2] Manning's *Sermons* (1847), vol. i. Sermon xxii.

Invisible union helps towards visible unity. It is the closest of all bonds. No schism can rend it. It alone makes us able to sing with reality, 'We are not divided: all one body we.' It is 'like as when the head of a far-reaching procession winding through a broken hollow land, hides itself in some bending vale: it is still all one; all advancing together; they that are furthest onward on the way are conscious of their lengthened following; they that linger with the last are drawn forward, as it were, by the attraction of the advancing multitude. They are all one in the personality of His Mystical Body.'[1] This invisible union is no small asset in our struggle for visible unity. One who fought for, and failed us, wrote before he left us: 'Another most excellent benefit of the Commemoration [of the Departed] is its tendency to heal the schisms of the visible Church. No particular branch of the visible body can be in energetic unity with the fellowship of other churches so long as its fellowship with the Church unseen is suspended. When once the bond of faith and love with this is loosened, the bond of visible unity also is nigh dissolved. In all contests of the Church on earth, all her members, be they never so much divided (unless by heresy or schism) still

[1] Manning's *Sermons*, vol. i. Sermon xxii.

hold Communion in the Court of Heaven,' the invisible Church. Their hearts make, as it were, a silent appeal for each other's misunderstandings to that world where all things are fully understood. The Eastern and the Western are one in Athanasius and Cyprian, in Basil and Augustine, and in the line of Holy Bishops and the companies of blessed Saints long ago fallen asleep, the Churches of the West are one. Schisms are half healed when hearts are chafed into love towards one common object: even as alienated sons meet and embrace in their love to one fond Mother. And as Saints of Christendom are the unearthly bond even of divided Churches, so is the hallowed ancestry of each particular Church a bond of unity to its several members. Men are already half-reconciled when they have agreed to honour one and the same spiritual lineage.' 'We, with all those that are departed,' is the basis of Prayers for the Dead as taught in our English Prayer Book. 'We with them, and they with us, unites the two worlds in a bond of love which nothing but self-will can sever.'

This Communion of Saints involves a permanent oneness between the living and the dead. S. Ambrose, writing after his brother's death, says: 'But if in the quiet of night our souls still cleaving

to the chains of the body, and as it were bound within the prison bars of the limbs, yet are able to see higher and separate things, how much more do they see these, when in their pure and heavenly senses they suffer from no hindrance of bodily weakness. And so when, as a certain evening was drawing on, I was complaining that thou didst not revisit me when at rest, thou wast wholly present always. So that, as I lay with my limbs bathed in sleep, while I was (in mind) awake for thee, and thou wast alive to me, I could say, what is death, my brother? For certainly thou wast not separated from me for a single moment, for thou wast so present with me everywhere, that that enjoyment of each other, which we were unable to have in the intercourse of this life, is now always and everywhere with us. For at that time certainly all things could not be present, for neither did our physical constitution allow it, nor could the sight of each other, nor the sweetness of our bodily embraces at all times and in all places be enjoyed. But the pictures in our souls were always present with us, even when we were not together, and these have not come to an end, but constantly come back to us, and the greater the longing the greater abundance have we of them.

'So then I hold thee, my brother, and neither

death nor time shall tear thee from me. Tears themselves are sweet, and weeping itself a pleasure, for by these the eagerness of the soul is assuaged and affection being eased is quieted. For neither can I be without thee or ever forget thee.'[1]

'Her only support,' wrote Queen Victoria to Lord Canning after the death of the Prince Consort, 'the only ray of comfort she gets for a moment, is the firm conviction and certainty of his nearness, his undying love, and of their eternal reunion.'[2] A man once worked for ten years, early and late, in order to save money enough to marry the one he had known and loved from childhood. Just as the goal is within sight Death comes suddenly into the House of Life, and—as in Watts's picture of *Love and Death*—all unheeding of Love, who strives to bar his way, Death jostles Love aside, and in a moment separates the lovers. The girl died, and the man was left desolate. Was he to be told that his loved one ceased to be, ceased to love him, ceased to be interested in him, ceased to pray for him, and that he must cease to love, be interested in, and pray for her? Was he to believe that a God of love had allowed and implanted an affection which had lasted through ten happy years of

[1] *On the decease of his brother Satyrus*, Bk. i. Section 73, 74.
[2] *Life and Letters of Queen Victoria*, 1837-1861, p. 478.

love and work for each other, and that, after all, Love was not stronger than Death? Was he to feel that from that moment all was over between them, at all events until the man died also and rejoined his love in Paradise—if, indeed, she had not already dropped out of existence, or fallen into an endless sleep, or been absorbed into universal being? No revelation, no Church teaching, though both are available, are needed to confront such a lie with the opposite truth. Instinct alone tells us that there is no such severance. But when we have both Church and Bible on the side of our inherent instinct, we have a threefold assurance of the truth of a creed which bids us assert our belief in the Communion of Saints. The lover could be told as he knelt beside his love, that the Communion of Saints was a reality, that the poet's words were true:—

> Up the Mount of Aspiration
> Ye shall journey hand in hand,
> Still encompassed by the vision
> Lovers only understand.

Such certainly is our old English belief. So is it expressed in the words of our own Edward I., who erected a cross to Queen Eleanor wherever her corpse rested on the way from Lincolnshire to Westminster. 'We loved her tenderly in her life,'

said the King to the Abbot of Cluny, when asking his prayers for her, 'and we do not cease to love her in death.'

One other thought is something more than permissible. An appeal to history shows that a belief in Immortality is essential for a nation's social welfare, if not for its continued existence. Preaching in the Cathedral at Florence, Padre Agostino da Montefeltro, amid a low murmur of *Bene*, *Bene*, declares: 'The dogma of the Immortality of the soul is necessary for the civilisation and welfare of nations, and the most imprudent friends of the people are those who deny the Immortality of the soul. For history teaches us a lesson which is dazzling in its truth. It is this: that nations decay and perish in exact proportion as the natural belief in a future life diminishes or becomes extinct. My brethren, let a nation be barbarous, let a nation be fierce, let a nation be in error; but if this nation still preserve its temples, its altars—if this nation has faith in other destinies besides those which are fulfilled in this present life; if the soldiers of this nation fight like the hordes coming down from the forests of Germany with Arminius, looking forward to that award which awaits the brave, and shunning dishonour rather than death, the armies of civilised

nations who have no faith will be powerless to withstand this people.' Such words, preached in Lent 1887, have lost none of their truth in Lent 1909.

CHAPTER VI

IMMORTALITY AND PSYCHOLOGY

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There is another world all around us, and in that world are the souls of the dead. *Newman.*

The alleged appearance of Spirits appeals strongly to many as an unanswerable argument in favour of a belief in Immortality. Moreover, the united testimony of unimpeachable witnesses practically compels our assent to a belief in such appearances, quite apart from our adherence to this or that theory as to their causation.

It is argued that a belief in Apparitions logically implies a belief in the continued existence of the soul after death. Thus Origen writes: 'He who does believe this [*i.e.* in Ghosts] necessarily believes in Immortality, or at all events in the long continuance of the soul: as Plato does in his treatise on the soul [*i.e.* the *Phædo*] where he says that the shadowy apparitions of the dead hover round their tombs. These apparitions, then, have some sub-

stance: it is the so-called "radiant" frame in which the soul exists.' [1]

It is worth while very briefly to examine the argument, in the light of modern experimental psychology. We will content ourselves with dealing with the present general results of research, and with a mere hint at one line of thought.

It is, we may assume, largely accepted [2] (however the fact may be accounted for, and however greatly we may differ about theories of causation) that apparitions are undoubtedly seen, and seen by many at the same time, and in the same place. To deny such an assertion would be to suggest an ignorance of the records of the Society for Psychical Research. It is not in the assertion, but in the deductions drawn from the assertion, that points of difference arise. It is in the attempts made to explain how such Apparitions appear, rather than in the assertion that they do appear, that the theories of contending schools clash with any serious acuteness. What are these theories?

Broadly speaking, there are two explanatory theories about Apparitions.

(1) That the spirits of the dead, in their disem-

[1] Cf. *S. Gregory of Nyssa*, 'Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,' p. 448 n.

[2] But see Article in *Nineteenth Century* (Jan. 1909) by Prof. Simon Newcombe.

bodied state, actually and objectively appear to and are seen by the living.

(2) That the minds of the living, in their subjective condition, create phantasms which are objectively perceptible to the senses.

Assuming that neither theory need necessarily exclude the truth of the other, we will examine each.

(1) As to the first theory, viz. that Spirits do actually and truly return from spirit-land, and appear objectively on earth, it cannot be seriously disputed that credible witnesses assert that they have seen them, and have seen them under test-conditions which preclude all possibility of fraud. Further, it is asserted, though certainly not proved, that photographs of such Apparitions have been taken with varying degrees of clarity. This theory is, of course, wholly extra-mundane, and if proved, would at once satisfy our questionings and longings in favour of a future existence. One obvious and elementary difficulty, however, in accepting such a theory is the somewhat prosaic and commonplace one of 'clothes.' The fact that Apparitions practically always appear clothed, and are not infrequently seen in carriages, has never yet been satisfactorily explained, although it has been attributed by some to the bodies and material surroundings of those present.

However tempting, therefore, the theory is, we must be scrupulously honest in not pressing it as argument for more than it is worth. If it can be shown that any other theory may not only account for Apparitions, but also account for their appearance in ordinary clothes, then we must admit that the first theory does not, by itself, actually prove the continued existence of the soul after death, however strong may be and is the presumption on other grounds.

(2) Can then, we ask, the second theory, that spirits are images—real images—created by the subjective mind, account for Apparitions clothed in familiar garments? Can such Apparitions be creations of the subjective mind of man? Let us see.

Now, it seems to be common ground:

(1) That man has a dual mental organisation, or mind acting under two conditions:—the objective which perceives things through the media of the senses, and the subjective (or sub-conscious) which perceives things by intuition—*i.e.* sees without eyes, hears without ears (as, for instance, in sleep).

(2) That this subjective mind, or condition of mind, can and does act independently of the objective mind, and indeed is most impressionable when (as in sleep, or in the hour of death) the objective mind is least active.

(3) That the subjective mind, or condition of mind, is singularly open to 'Suggestion,' either telepathic or autopathic, and that distance has no effect whatever in the exercise of this power of Suggestion.

(4) That this law of Suggestion is so powerful that one subjective mind can create an image and can project or convey it to another subjective mind, irrespective of space.

Those who maintain the second theory assert that Apparitions are real images created by Suggestion, telepathically or autopathically, in the subjective mind, and in certain cases projected or telepathed from one subjective mind to another.

This is what Sir Oliver Lodge says on the point: 'The first fact established by the [Psychical Research] Society's labour was the reality of telepathy, that is to say, of the apparently direct action of one mind or another by means unknown to science. That a thought, or image, or impression, or emotion, in the mind of one person can arouse a similar impression in the mind of another person sufficiently sympathetic, and sufficiently at leisure to attend and to record the impression is now proved.[1] But the mechanism whereby it is done, or even if there can be anything that can be likened

[1] But see *Hibbert Journal*, April 1908, p. 571.

to physical mechanism at all, is still unknown. The appearance is as if it were a direct action of mind on mind or of brain on brain, irrespective of the usual nerves and muscles and organs of sense. This fact alone—once admitted after having run the traditional gauntlet of Scepticism—served to explain, at least in a plausible and tentative manner, a number of puzzling phenomena; notably it served as the key to the phenomena of Apparitions of every kind whether of sight or of hearing or of touch. It reduced the rudimentary difficulty about clothes and accessories of so-called 'Ghosts' to absurdities; since, of course, a mental impression would represent a person under something like customary, though it may be unexpected, surroundings, just as happens in an ordinary dream.'[1] Thus Dean Stanley relates that Becket was cleft 'from the left half of his forehead to the left half of his chin,' and adds, 'By this mark, subsequent apparitions of Becket were often recognised.'[2]

Indeed, it would only raise a further difficulty if the appearance were seen in any other form or clothing. Thus far, then, this explanation would seem to hold the field. It does not disprove but it accounts for more than the first theory.

[1] *Harper's Magazine*, Aug. 1908.
[2] *Memorials of Canterbury*, p. 96 n.

But here we must ask, what we are to say about spirit-photography? What are we to make of the assertion that photographs of Apparitions have been actually taken by means of the ordinary and familiar camera?

We may say two things. First, it has not yet been conclusively proved that such photographs have been taken; and secondly, if they have been taken, there is, according to the second theory, no scientific difficulty in accounting for them. Mr. Jay Hudson for instance, believes in the phenomena of so-called spirit-photography, and considers that it 'amply demonstrates the fact that visions can be created of such tangible character that they can be caught and fixed upon the photographic plate.' He says: 'In admitting this class of phenomena to be genuine, it is also admitted that in many instances, pictures of dead friends have been produced which were such perfect likenesses of the deceased, as to be unmistakable.' 'Of course,' he continues, 'it will be understood that whilst I admit the phenomenon, I do not admit the claim that it has its origin in the spirit world. Like all other so-called spirit phenomena, it is, in my opinion, directly traceable to the power of the subjective mind of the medium, aided by the telepathic communion with the sitter. The latter, consciously or

unconsciously thinks of one or more of his dead friends. The medium, perceiving telepathically the image created in the mind of the sitter, re-creates it in such tangible shape that it is caught by the camera. Indeed, in many recorded instances, where the sitter has been a powerful medium it seems probable that he created the image himself. In point of fact there is little doubt that the power resides, to a great or less extent, in all human beings to create such images, their strength of clearness depending, of course, upon the power of the individual to recall vividly the remembrance of the person to be photographed, together with the power to concentrate his mind for a certain length of time upon the mental picture. Indeed, experiments have been made which demonstrate the power to produce the picture of any one, living or dead, in this manner.'[1]

In regard specially to the Dead, Sir Oliver Lodge is less certain—though he, too, has no difficulty in accounting for spirit-photography if proved to be a fact. He says:

'The question of photography applied to visible phantasms, . . . is still an open one—at any rate no photographic evidence has yet appeared conclusive to me.' But this is not all he has to say. He is

[1] Hudson's *Psychic Phenomena*, chap. xx.

dealing with the question of phantasmal appearances and hallucinations, 'as if it were intended to imply—as it is often mistakenly assumed to imply—that there is no objective reality underlying the Apparition whatever,' and says: 'It is, however, fully admitted that some hallucinations may be, and indeed are, *veridical* (*i.e.* truth-telling), inasmuch as they correspond with some real event, due perhaps to an emotion, due perhaps to an accident or to the illness or decease of the distant or visualised person. They therefore do correspond with some objective reality; just as the image in a looking-glass corresponds with, and is veridical evidence of, some objective reality; but as to any substantial reality about a phantasm—that must be regarded as demanding further investigation. Hypothetically it may differ in different cases, and in no case can it be safe to assume without special evidence that it has any more substantiality than the image in a looking-glass.' And he adds: 'If successful photography could prove that the impression was not only a mental one, but that the ether of space had been definitely affected in a certain way also, so that the impression had probably become received by the optical apparatus of the eye, and had been transmitted in the usual way to the brain, it would not prove substantiality, since, of course, it is perfectly

easy to photograph the virtual image formed by a looking-glass. Still, genuine photography would indicate a step in advance of telepathy: it would establish one variety of what is called psychical phenomena. There is, in truth, a vast amount of evidence for psychical phenomena of this technically supernormal kind; but they have not yet made good their claim to clear and positive acceptance in the way that telepathy has done.'[1]

On the whole, and as at present informed, may we not say on the one hand that, however strong the presumption of visits from the spirit-world may be and is, the first theory has not been so absolutely successfully proved as to warrant our accepting it as a final evidence in favour of a future state of existence, while on the other hand the second theory certainly does seem to lessen difficulties, the solution of which any other explanation leaves at present unsolved.

But in spite of all that investigation is revealing about the relative importance of the subjective and objective, in the face of all modern explanation of psychological phenomena, there still remains something in the old-fashioned ghost story not fully accounted for. Want of proof is, after all, only

[1] *Psychical Research*, Sir Oliver Lodge in *Harper's Magazine*, August 1908.

negative evidence, and the more we investigate, the less dogmatic do we become in brushing aside all such stories as simple nonsense. After fully admitting that an explanation, in some cases, lies in nerves, or in optical delusions, or in self-induced visions, or other intelligent interpretations, there still remains a substratum amid the vast mass of Ghost-stories which cannot, on the evidence before us, be wholly accounted for. The subject is at least worthy of further investigation by experts, and it is by no means certain that such investigation may not lead to the discovery of a link in the chain of evidence in favour of a continued life after death.

Certainly the Christian faith throws no difficulty in the way of further investigation, or of the possibility of spirits appearing. Such a belief is, indeed, more than hinted at in both the Old and the New Testaments.[1]

The late Henry Melvill, canon of S. Paul's, comments thus on Job iv. 15-17: 'There can be no dispute that we have in the narrative of Eliphaz the account of an apparition. A purely spiritual being assumed a visible though indescribable form, and stood before Eliphaz in the silence of the

[1] Cf. Lev. xix. 31, xx. 6; Deut. xviii. 11; 1 Sam. xxviii. 15; S. Luke xvi. 30.

night. It is generally regarded as proof of a weak and superstitious mind to put faith in what are termed ghost stories, tales of apparitions, whether of the dead, or of unknown visitants from the spiritual world. But we do not see why so much of scepticism and ridicule should be afloat on the matter of alleged apparitions. We see nothing whatever in the statements of Scripture, or the deductions of reason, from which to decide that there cannot be apparitions; that the invisible state may never communicate with the visible through the instrumentality of phantoms, strange and boding forms that are manifestly not of this earth. And if you cannot show either from revelation or the nature of things that apparitions are impossible, of course the truth or falsehood of any alleged case is simply dependent on testimony. There may be easily a fond and weak credulity in regard of ghosts and apparitions; but there may be also, we believe, a cold and hard scepticism; and knowing how thin is the veil which hangs between the visible and invisible worlds, it might be better for us to be classed with the credulous than with those who are too enlightened to be superstitious, if superstition be the thinking that God, for wise purposes, may sometimes draw aside the veil or make it transparent on this side as

well as the other. It is, moreover, worth observing that the Bible so far from discountenancing the notion of apparitions may be said to give it the weight of its testimony, and that too in more than one instance. No more thorough case of apparition could be imagined than is put upon record in the narrative of Eliphaz; you could not find in the most marvellous of ghost stories more of the supernatural demonstration, nor more of that paralysing effect, which, ever since sin separated between man and God, appears produced even on the best by visitations from the spiritual world. The passing of the spirit before Eliphaz; the standing up of the hair of his flesh, the indistinctness yet truth of the image, and then after a solemn pause the deep oracular voice, burdened with weighty question—why, there is nothing in any book, whether of fiction or fact, which takes greater hold on the imagination or more exquisitely portrays what might be supposed a case of apparition. If every subsequent tale of supernatural appearance be invention or fable, at least the fable is modelled after a true story; and we should have Scripture from which to prove that there might come an apparition, if we had no human record whatever that any had been seen.'[1]

[1] *Less Prominent Facts in Sacred Story*, vol. ii., p. 64 *sq.*

A like hint may be found in the story of Dives and Lazarus where our Lord explains the uselessness, not the impossibility, of one from the dead visiting the earth in that particular case. Even the self-styled Spiritualist with all the wretched untruth which underlies a non-Christian Spiritualism, has grasped a truth—a truth borrowed from the Christian Church—when he asserts the possibility of intercourse between the living and the dead. The possibility of such a communion, the joy of such an event in our lives as the visible appearance of one from 'the great cloud of witnesses,' by whom we are encompassed; the possibility of one coming to us from the dead, is not ruled out of court either by the Bible or the Church. If God—not man—chose for His own special purpose, and our essential good, to let a spirit from the intermediate state appear to us, there would be nothing very surprising about it. But, for a self-styled Spiritualist to claim, and exercise, or pretend to exercise, the power to disturb the rest of the Departed, to call back a spirit from the dead for the sake of sensationalism, or moneymaking, or the exhibition of some occult power, is a very different and a wholly unwarrantable thing. Even granting the entirely unproved assumption that he really has the

power, both Scripture and the Church would condemn the use of it, save under some direct command from God.

In spite, however, of such pretensions, and the harm they do, we are learning, amid all the rubbish of premature assertions, that we know but the alphabet of the subject. Whether God uses methods in accordance with natural laws, such as telepathy or thought-transference, as media of communication between the seen and the unseen world, the wisest would hesitate to affirm, or deny. Happily we are not required to do either one or the other. What we are required to do, and what we thankfully assert our right to do, is to say our responding Amen to the eighth Article of the Christian Faith, 'I believe in the Communion of Saints.'

Whilst, then, fully expressing our belief in the possibility of any one of the witnesses by whom we are encompassed becoming visible to us, should God (not man) so will it, and holding that such a belief is in no sense contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church, we hold that psychology by itself knows too little as yet to build up any conclusive theory, or belief, upon foundations that are, to scientific and even psychological experts still insecure. Want of psychological evidence

makes us wait for further light. We believe in the possibility of spirits appearing from spirit-land; but, from a scientific point of view, we see no certain proof that they have done so.

CHAPTER VII

DO THE DEAD KNOW?

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Ideoque et nos tantam habentes impositam nubem testium. *The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews.*

But it may be asked, Do the dead really know anything about us? Is such a belief Scriptural? Is it legitimate for us to hold Tennyson's happy suggestion

Though I cannot speak a word, I shall hearken what you say,
And be often, often with you when you think me far away?

May we echo the creed of S. Gregory Nazianzen in the funeral oration over his sister Gorgona: 'And if thou takest any account of our affairs—*and holy souls receive from God this privilege*—do thou accept these words of mine'?

Even if we cannot lay down any law on such a subject, it is no more dogmatic to say that the

Dead do know, than to assert, as the manner of some is, that they do not know. But, thank God, neither Scripture nor the Church leaves us wholly in the dark for an answer to our question. Scripture seems clearly and deliberately to assume that the Dead do know. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews bases a weighty argument upon the fact that we are running our race under the full vision of the Blessed Dead.[1] Such an argument would be meaningless if the witnesses saw nothing.

'Let us also,' he says, 'in our turn, play our part in the history of our times, as they played their part in the history of their times; 'let us also' face the problems of our day as they faced the problems of their day; and 'let us also' hold out unto the end under the inspiring thought that the old spiritual athletes of past days are watching us. 'Seeing that we are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses,[2] let us also run the race that is set before us.' Whatever our own opinion may be, there is no room for doubt as to what Scripture here implies.

Dean Alford, commenting on the passage, says: 'The words must be taken as distinctly so far implying community between the Church trium-

[1] Heb. xii. 1, 2. R. V.

[2] See note by Bishop Westcott at end of chapter.

phant and the Church below, that they who have entered into heavenly rest are conscious of what passes amongst ourselves. Any interpretation short of this leaves the exhortation here without point. If they are merely quasi-witnesses in a metaphor, the motive, as far as this clause supplies one, is gone.'[1]

And the Church speaks through her wisest and best to the same effect. To quote almost at random, Jeremy Taylor says: 'It is certain that they are not dead, and though we no more see the souls of our dead friends than we did when they were alive, yet we have reason to believe them to know more things and better.'[2]

And so S. Gregory Nazianzen: 'All the saints who have departed this life, still retaining their love for those that are in the world, concern themselves for their salvation, and aid them by their prayers and intercessions with God.' We might multiply such passages at pleasure.

Both Church and Bible, then, allow us to believe that, in so far as God sees fit, the Blessed Dead do know what we are doing on earth, and know better than when on earth what to ask for on our behalf. It seems, indeed, more reasonable that they should; and there is certainly nothing un-

[1] *Ep. to the Hebrews*, xii. 1, 2.
[2] *Holy Dying*, Section viii.

reasonable in such a belief. 'If,' as Dr. Liddon reminds us, 'our telescopes report to us even the geography of different planets, it is not very difficult to believe that a fuller vision of the departed reports to them the geography of this planet.' Otherwise, they seem to be in a lower rather than a higher stage of knowledge than they were here. 'We converse hourly with inhabitants of other continents, and we pass from point to point with a rapidity which makes us in fact masters of the world in quite a new sense from that in which former generations of men were its masters.' If it is so with us now, is there anything incredible in the belief that the departed may, in some unrevealed way, know about us, converse with us, inspire us with many a thought and prayer and suggestion otherwise unaccounted for?

It is interesting to note how this belief has taken hold of different classes of minds. It is related of Cecil Rhodes that he again and again referred to his returning to earth to see how his ideals were prospering, and what was being done with the fortune that he had dedicated to the service of posterity. And should this be impossible, he always assumed that, in the after life, he would be able to recognise and converse with those who had gone before, and that both he and they would have the keenest

interest in the affairs of this planet.[1] Schumann believed that Schubert and Mendelssohn knew what he was composing, and that their spirits visited him in sleep, and gave him a theme which he afterwards wrote down. It may have been a dream; it may have been imagination; but it need not necessarily have been untrue. Were they not all three in the one great orchestra, though on different parts of the stage?

And if the dead do know, what a help the thought may be to us! What an added help to the revealed truth that 'God knows'; what a restraining and encouraging thought; what a condescension to our weakness that we should be allowed to live in the thought that not only an all-seeing God, but a 'great cloud of witnesses,' many of them known to us here, is watching us at all hours of the day—and 'also the night'; what a deterrent against sin as well as an encouragement for perseverance. 'Grant,' wrote the late Prince Imperial, 'that there may sink deeper and deeper into my heart the conviction, that those who are gone are witnesses of my actions. My life shall then be worthy to be seen by them all. My innermost thought shall then be such as will never cause me to blush.'[2]

[1] *Life of Cecil Rhodes.*

[2] Dean Stanley's *Westminster Abbey Sermons*, p. 254.

How they know, if they know, we know not. It is one of 'the secret things which belong to God.' It has been thought that God Himself may tell them; or that they themselves may see us with the eyes of their opened understanding; or that the Holy Angels may act as media of communication; or that souls from earth as they enter into rest take them news; or that spirit needs no media for intercourse with spirit. 'They may know, or feel,' says Jeremy Taylor, 'by a reflex revelation from God, or some under-communication from an angel, or the stock of acquired notices here below.'[1] Who knows? But it is a happy thought both for them and for us, that they see and know much that is hidden from our eyes, much that will tell them how best to pray for us here. It is said that had Thorneycroft known all at Spion Kop, he would have held his grip upon the hill; that, could he have seen across the hills and known the discouragement of the Boers, he would have held his ground. But this was hidden from his eyes, while the horror of his own losses was too apparent. Here on earth we cannot see across the hills: we fix our eyes upon our own losses and do not see the flight of the enemy. There, they see the discouragement of

[1] *Holy Dying*, Section viii.

the enemy, and, in the light of knowledge, they cheer us on to victory as they pray that we may 'hold our grip upon the hill.'

May not this enlarged sphere of knowledge, in spite of its consequent pain, form one element in the 'joy and felicity' into which the Blessed Dead have, as our Prayer Book teaches us, already entered? It is difficult to see how it can be otherwise, unless we are foolish enough to believe the lie that death dispenses us from the results of sin, or that the act of dying puts everything to rights. Indeed, even if such were the effect of death upon the dead, are they to have no thought for the fate of the living—the living whose souls, perhaps, they have injured? Would the 'bliss of ignorance' which they had entered into help those who were left behind, left perhaps to face sin's results alone? Are the dead to escape scot free, and the living to suffer for their sin? Is this the most elementary form of justice? Even if death did absolve 'the one taken,' what about the life of 'the other left'? Is there no higher conception of the Intermediate State than the misused aphorism 'where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise'?[1] Painful as the knowledge may be, there is mercy even in knowledge.

[1] From Gray's Ode, *On a distant prospect of Eton College.*

Let us ask the familiar question: How could a mother be perfectly happy in Paradise if she knows of the sin of her child on earth, and knows that she is largely to blame? We may say in passing that it is a little hard on mothers that they should invariably be regarded as bad mothers, and that good mothers should—in argument—be deprived of the joy of seeing the spiritual progress of their children, because—in argument—the reverse knowledge would cause bad mothers pain.

Can we not imagine some mother, freed from the curse of ignorance, finding a joy in knowing of the child's life, and so being enabled to help the soul of one whose upbringing her neglect or example has spoilt? She knows now what she has done. Because she knows, she can do something. Her 'knowledge is power.' She can by prayer help to undo the consequences of the sin, which itself can never be undone. She can pray in the light of knowledge as she could never have prayed in the darkness of ignorance. What an incomparably higher conception than that of the cold, dreary negation that 'where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise'!

Or, may we not see some element of happiness in the lives of those in Paradise who are conscious of having lowered the standard of another's life

on earth. If they know the result—but only if they know—then something can be done, some help can be ministered by the princely power of intercession; the 'one that is taken' can at least pray that the glaring sins, the 'scarlet' sins, of 'the other that is left' may be washed white as the white which is 'whiter than snow.' Is not this a far higher conception of penitential happiness than the utterly selfish and miscalled bliss of ignorance?

Once again, can we not imagine a certain joy in the life of penitence in Paradise of one who has played the fiend with some innocent child, and is shocked by the shock of knowledge into realising the full horror of the sin? Such an one can, in the light of knowledge, take the victim to the All-sinless in prayer, and place the burden on the Good Shepherd's shoulders—the only real resting-place for both sinner and sinned-against. Such a conception of happiness is, at least, higher than the base suggestion that death will 'settle up' all accounts, or that the 'bliss of ignorance' will automatically equalise the position of everybody.

It is difficult to conceive a brighter happiness, apart from the brightest joy of all, than that of knowing, as far as God sees fit, that one whom

we have injured here by some sin of omission or commission, is being assisted by our prayers in Paradise; that we can still exercise the ministry of help in the Intermediate State; that, through our instrumentality, this one or that one has been pardoned through the Precious Blood. In a state where self-love is being lost in love for others, it is not difficult to conceive that, in spite of the purifying pain, happiness will be found in the fact that the dead do know the condition of the living, that they do pray for them, that they pray with all the added force of prayer based on knowledge.

But, if they do know, if they know of our failures and failings, the thought at once suggests itself, how can they be perfectly happy in Paradise? They cannot. But it is nowhere revealed that they are. On the contrary, it is clearly revealed that they are still waiting for their perfect consummation and bliss. Till they are perfectly happy, they must suffer. Knowledge involves pain.

It need not, of course, follow that the departed know all. But, even if they do, would they not rather know all than know nothing? Would they not be made happier by knowing than by being left in the torture chamber of suspense? To know nothing would, as far as we can see—and that is not very far—be more terrible than to know the worst. The South African war taught us—as well-

remembered scenes at the War Office and in homes can testify—that there is no pain like the pain of suspense. 'I would rather know the worst than know nothing.' Often and often we heard the words from parents, and wives, and relations, and friends, and lovers. Would not suspense turn Paradise into Hell? To know more fully in Paradise might, at all events, enable us to help those still wrestling or failing to wrestle here. We might, at least, pray such an one into the right path. Many a man may owe his final perseverance or his conversion to the prayers of some departed one who knows of his battlings or his wanderings, and who has prayed him into faith or endurance. Such knowledge may be part of the 'joy and felicity' no less than part of the pain of Paradise. As the Blessed Dead wait for our arrival, may not the joy of anticipation be increased by the knowledge that they are helping us on our journey? That alone, in spite of the pain of knowledge, would be a foretaste of future bliss. Better, far better; happier, far happier; truer, far truer this belief, than the despairing Creed of Hell that it is 'too late now.' Surely it is reasonable to believe with Jeremy Taylor that 'there they better attend to their relatives, and to greater purposes though in other manner, than they did here below.'[1] Then,

[1] *Holy Dying*, Section viii.

perhaps, they may know that their past failures have something to say to our present failings, and may help us to amend by their prayers. Then, perhaps, the very pain of knowledge may have in it some element of happiness necessary for their perfection.

But, it will be asked, is there then pain in Paradise? Surely. Paradise is an imperfect state, and imperfection has in it the nature of pain.

Let us think, then, of *The Pain of Paradise.*

Note.—Bishop Westcott commenting on Heb. xii. 1, 2, after pointing out that the word 'cloud' is used in all languages from the time of Homer for a mass of human beings, says: 'The witnesses of whom the cloud is composed are unquestionably the countless heroes of the faith whose deeds have been summarised in chap. xi. There is apparently no evidence that *μάρτυς* is ever used simply as a spectator. At the same time it is impossible to exclude the thought of spectators in the amphitheatre. The passage would not lose its vividness, though it would lose its power, if *θεατῶν* were substituted for *μαρτύρων*. These champions of old time occupy the space of spectators. They are spectators who interpret to us the meaning of our struggle, and who bear testimony to the certainty of our success if we strive lawfully' (2 Tim. ii. 5). And he adds: 'There is no confusion in this fulness of sense. The word *περικείμενον* gives the thought of the great company to whom the Christian athlete is made a spectacle (1 Cor. iv. 9); and *μαρτύρων* explains what the true nature of this host is, widely different from the pitiless throng visible to the bodily eye at the heathen games' (Westcott, *Ep. to the Hebrews*, xii. 1, 2, p. 391).

CHAPTER VIII

THE PAIN OF PARADISE

CHAPTER VIII

THE PAIN OF PARADISE [1]

We have no right to assert that the redeeming and consummating process will be accomplished without an admixture of salutary and accepted pain.

W. E. Gladstone.

We have seen that Paradise is a place of imperfec-

[1] The term Paradise is used here and elsewhere for that part of Hades which is inhabited by the souls of the just—the abode or Intermediate State of the souls of the Blessed in the interval between death and the general Resurrection: Hades being 'the place of departed spirits, good and bad alike, which is, however, divided into two portions by a great and impassable gulf' (cf. *Speaker's Commentary* on S. Luke xvi. 23). For a full and illuminating discussion of what the ancient Fathers meant by the word, see Tertullian, *Apologetic and Practical Treatises* (Library of the Fathers), vol. i. p. 116 *sq.* (Note c.). Cf. also S. Augustine, Sermon 298, *In Nat. Apost. Pet. et Paul.*, iv., where he states his ignorance as to where the martyrs and other departed are. 'Where are those saints, think we? There where it is well. What seekest thou more? Thou knowest not the place, but think on their desert. Wherever they are, they are with God. "The souls of the just are in the hand of God."' In an interesting article on Paradise in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, Dean Plumptre, quoting Origen, writes: 'So far as it is a place, it is a school in which the souls of men are trained, and learn to judge rightly of the things they have done and seen on earth.' (Cf. Origen, *De Princip.*, ii. 12.)

tion; that all imperfection has in it the nature of pain; that not until 'we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,'[1] can there be perfect happiness for any individual soul. Life is social. It must ever be 'we with them, and they with us.'

How, and in what sense do the departed suffer? Does not the Church of England expressly condemn such an idea in her 22nd Article? Surely not. 'The Church of England in Article XXII. condemns, and justly condemns, "the Roman doctrine concerning purgatory." That is to say, it condemns the ordinary doctrine held in the middle of the sixteenth century by Christians who believed in the Supremacy of the Pope. That doctrine taught that the Intermediate State is a place of torment, and that souls are continually passing from Purgatory to Heaven before the day of Resurrection, in virtue of prayers offered by their friends on earth and indulgences procured for them.'[2] But this condemnation does not exclude all, or all kinds of, pain.

Let us think of the pain of Paradise under

[1] Eph. iv. 13.

[2] Pullan, *Book of Common Prayer*, Oxford Library of Practical Theology, p. 244.

three heads. The pain of Contrast; the pain of Sympathy; the pain of Waiting.

The pain of Contrast. 'To be with Christ.'[1] What must it mean? We can get a glimpse, only a glimpse, of it here. The dirty sweep in the fairy tale first realised his blackness when he came down the wrong chimney, and saw the little lady in white. Under the snow-white coverlet, upon the snow-white pillow, he saw the snow-white child. Then, suddenly turning round, he saw an ugly black figure, and behold! it was himself. He saw himself as he was, saw himself reflected in a great mirror the like of which he had never seen before. The sight of another's whiteness revealed to him his own blackness. For the first time he found out that he was dirty, burst into tears of shame and anger, and turned to sneak up the chimney and hide. He felt the smarting pain of contrast.

If I contrast my life with that of the best man or woman that I know; if I bring all my pettiness, my selfishness, my want of purity of intention, under the searchlight of a life lived in the rarer atmosphere of simplicity and selflessness, I must feel something of the pain of contrast. It is almost a suffering to breathe in such an atmosphere. It was this terrible pain of contrast which bowed

[1] Phil. i. 23.

the prophet to the ground and drew from him the bitter cry: 'Woe is me, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts':[1] the mere contrast between the human and the Divine was more than he could bear. The present Bishop of London tells a fine story to the point. 'Not long ago a young man came to me who had at last seen himself as he was. I had tried three years before to save him from a deadly sin, but failed. He did not see the sin as sin. But a few weeks ago, he had seen himself as he was, and why? Because he had looked at last into the eyes of a woman whom he loved for the first time with a pure, true love, and in her eyes he saw himself as he was.'[2]

And so it must be with us when we see 'God's Christ,' 'the express image of His Person.' 'To be with Christ'; to contrast my life with His; to see in Him what I might have been, and to compare it with what I am; to see myself in the mirror of 'the Face of Jesus Christ'—surely this may well have in it an element of pain. Dr. Newman puts it with a terrible beauty:

> There is a pleading in His pensive eyes
> Will pierce thee to the quick and trouble thee,
> And thou wilt hate and loathe thyself; for though
> Now sinless, thou wilt feel that thou hast sinned

[1] Is. vi. 5.

[2] *The Future of the Church and Nation*, chap. xv.

As never thou didst feel; and wilt desire
To slink away and hide thee from His sight,
And yet wilt have a longing aye to dwell
Within the beauty of His countenance,
And these two pains so counter and so keen—
The longing for Him when thou seest Him not,
The shame of self at thought of seeing Him—
Will be thy veriest, sharpest purgatory.[1]

A strange pain! and how strangely different from the mere material pains of a mediæval Purgatory! A terrible pain! and yet a blessed one, for it is the pain that purifies. It is purgation by the power of association. 'To be with Christ' is to catch Christlikeness; to become assimilated to the character of Him with whom we continually dwell. Even now we are learning something of this purgation by association. We no longer herd lads who need a birching, or the influence of a higher environment, with hardened offenders who have spent a long life in vice and crime. In theory, at least, we take them out of their environment, and let them associate with higher rather than with lower surroundings. We place the poor girl, who has 'erred and strayed from God's ways,' in some Penitentiary where she will associate with Sisters of Mercy and with lives dedicated to the service of the highest. Why? That she may

[1] *Dream of Gerontius.*

catch from them the wish for the higher which kills the desire for the lower. By creating a taste for the higher, we expel the love for the lower. 'Surely,' writes Sir John Herschel, 'if the worst of men were transported to Paradise for only half an hour, amongst the company of the great and good, he would come back converted.' The underlying principle is: 'We needs must love the highest *when we see it.*' In Paradise we shall see it. But the process implies pain—the pain of contrast. The vision of Jesus, pain-producing as it must be, will be the very means of our perfection. 'It is revealed to us that the perfecting of the being of the elect will be the result of beholding God. S. John says: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." The vision will transform us into itself according to the universal law of imitation. Our nature, influenced throughout its whole being by the object which it beholds, will at last take the impression of the Divine nature and be like It as It manifests Itself. That is the highest and most transcendent expression of the law of imitation. And, as we grow in character into the same mind which is in Christ, we are . . . growing into a meetness

for our future assimilation to the Eternal Godhead which will be the final consummation and bliss of ever-advancing life.'[1]

The pain of Sympathy. We see something of this pain on earth. To be with one who suffers, is ill-treated, despised, rejected, insulted, ignored; to be with one who is spending his or her life on others and is misunderstood, derided, overlooked, neglected, underrated; to love, and to see one we love suffer,—this is, surely, love's claim for sympathy. But it involves pain, a pain that is measured by the love. 'To be with Christ,' and to 'know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge'; to see Him sorrowing over His Church; to feel His sympathy with souls in sorrow; to enter, however distantly, into His pleadings for souls who have lost their way; to see Him, day after day, 'despised and rejected of men'; to see Him slighted, and neglected, and insulted in His sacraments; to be with Him all the time in Paradise, and to watch with Him in sleepless sympathy during the long hour of waiting for the end, this will be indeed a glorious honour; but it involves pain, the pain of sympathy.

This, too, is the pain of purification; for sympathy is the ejection of a fallen self, the losing of

[1] Lent Lectures, 1860, by Canon Carter.

self in others. As we enter into the fellowship of His sufferings, and in that fellowship find the self we have lost, selfless and transfigured, we learn to love the pain which purifies. In Paradise we shall enjoy fuller participation in Church life. The Church is the divinely instituted brotherhood, and the outflow of our sympathy on others will expel an undue sympathy for ourselves. The earthly pain of selfishness will be rendered impossible as we enter into the lives of others in Paradise, and spend ourselves on them in generous sympathy with what they too must suffer with Christ.

The pain of Waiting.[1] Waiting has in it the element of pain. Irritation is often caused by the mere fact of having to wait. We are waiting to keep an appointment. We have, it may be, nothing to do and it makes no difference to our plans whether we are kept two minutes or two hours; but the mere fact that we have to wait has in it something of the nature of pain. Expectationtide, with its 'wait for the promise of the Father,' cannot have been a time free from pain for the waiting Apostles, any more than waiting for the

[1] S. Augustine speaks of the joy of life for those in Paradise as 'a consolation for the delay.' 'This life which the Blessed Martyrs now have . . . is but a slight particle of the promise, nay, rather a consolation for the delay' (Serm. *In Nat. Mart. Perp. et Felic.*, i. § 5).

second Advent is free from suffering for us. The waiting Church is being purified by the pain of waiting.

It is revealed of the 'souls beneath the Altar that they should rest yet a little season.' Waiting is part of their discipline in Paradise.

> With happy trembling, and with holy fear,
> Beneath the Altar white-robed souls await
> The further opening of the opened gate,
> The brighter vision of His Face so dear
> With final triumph they anticipate,
> And through the burden of their wistful song,
> How long, O Lord! O conquering Lord, how long?

Unwearied in their love and loyalty, they are weary of waiting for the day when God shall openly take all that hindereth, or rather 'him that letteth,' out of the way.[1] Unfulfilled desire must ever endure something of the discipline of weariness. Anticipation tells of a perfection not yet come. Thus anticipation has its pains as well as its pleasures, and Paradise has still the pain as well as the joy of anticipation. The very cry 'Avenge,'[2] however impersonal, however purely uttered for God's greater glory, tells of a state of imperfection. But the pain of Paradise is not the pain of earth. The old earth-pain has in it the sting of doubt. That

[1] 2 Thess. ii. 7. [2] Rev. vi. 10.

has gone, and gone for ever. Doubt has been conquered by assurance,[1] and the sting of pain, that 'sharpness' of death which Händel could only illustrate by a dissonance, has gone. The Blessed Dead are not waiting in the pain of uncertainty as to final perseverance, or personal salvation. That is the pain of probation. Earnest doubt stings, and up to our very last hour the prayer of the Church is 'Suffer us not, at our last hour, to fall from Thee'; 'In the hour of death: Good Lord, deliver us.' In Paradise, there will be no more sin; and therefore no more sting in our suffering. The sting of death is sin, and sin will be slain. We shall have accomplished our probation; our wills will be eternally united to God's will. We shall know that we are safe as well as saved, though there will still be the discipline of uncertainty as to the time of our perfect consummation and bliss. The waiting Departed do not cry, as they have so often cried on earth: Can God be God? Will good beat evil? Is God stronger than Satan? They cry in no uncertainty as to the fact. Their uncertainty consists solely in their ignorance of the manifestation of the fact. They cry: 'How long' will it be before the fact is

[1] Cf. Bishop Stubbs's *Ordination Addresses, Sermon on S. Thomas.*

made known; before others will know what we know, and be safe as we are safe; before they arrive to perfect 'our consummation and bliss.' They wait for the answer, and in this waiting is their pain. 'How long' tells of the pain of desire, but it is a desire more precious than aught but realisation.

There is, indeed, a fourth pain of Paradise which the other pains include. It is the pain of Progress. Few who admit the possibility of an after life deny that it is a state of progress. Most would echo the belief of Frederick Myers, who, when speaking of Lord Tennyson's death, writes of him as having 'gone into the infinity which men call death,' and adds 'what honour for him, what progress still in that unknown which we shall some day know.' Few will question the truth of Goethe's last words, *Von Änderungen zu höheren Änderungen*, from changes to higher changes. The vision is

> As lamps upon a bridge at night
> Stretch on and on before the sight,
> Till the long vista endless seems.

But progress involves pain. The perfection of the finite is a state of painless progress, and that will only come in Heaven. The souls in Paradise are not yet perfect, and, as they wait for their per-

fection, each stage in their upward movement is won through the pain of progress. 'The Christian dead,' wrote a late Prime Minister of England, 'are in a progressive state, and the appointed office of the interval between death and the resurrection is reasonably believed to be the corroboration of every good and holy habit and effacement of all that remains of human infirmity and vice—a process of discipline, happy indeed in its results but of which we have no right to assert . . . that the redeeming and consummating process will be accomplished without an admixture of salutary and accepted pain.'[1] And if it be asked how pain and rest can co-exist, we must remember that pain, like rest, is an earth-born word. We know very little as yet of its real meaning and power, either here or hereafter. Pain certainly can co-exist with pleasure here, and already we know something of the mystery of rest *in* pain as well as rest *from* pain. How it may fit in with the greater joys and felicity of Paradise, we cannot say. We go to Paradise to find out. It may be consistent with an ineffable joy such as made the flames of the fiery furnace to be as a 'moist whistling wind' to the 'three holy children,'[2] or 'such as martyrs have known to act almost as a physical

[1] Mr. Gladstone's *Testimony to the Catholic Faith*, p. 13.
[2] Song of the Three Children, 27.

anæsthetic acts.'[1] There may well be, in some curative form, 'majestic pains' such as Dante ascribes in figure to Sordello as he waits at the foot of the steps of the Mount of Cleansing—'having, it may be, long to wait, but where no more change could harm him.'[2] We can but surmise here what these pains will be. The door is opened but a little way yet to this and many another mystery. Meanwhile, 'We wait for light.'[3]

[1] Cf. Ellicott's *Commentary on S. Luke*, xxiii. 43.
[2] *Dante and other Essays*, by Dean Church, p. 258.
[3] Isaiah, lix. 9.

CHAPTER IX

PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD

CHAPTER IX

PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD

To pray for the dead is not forbidden in the Church of England. *Bishop Stubbs.*

We have thought that the pain and felicity of those in Paradise find utterance in their prayers for us.

A further question arises—May we pray for them?

It is a natural instinct to pray for the dead—not indeed connecting our prayers for them with probation (that is over) but progression. Prayers for the Dead deal with the soul's perfection, not with its probation. 'That there is fresh probation, God forbid; for if the sinner might then have a fresh chance of grace, the saint might also have a fresh chance of perdition. It would be intolerable to think so.' Nowhere are we bidden, or permitted to pray that.

This being clear, what are we to say about Prayers for the Dead?

The expression 'Prayers for the Dead' is an unfortunate one. It is the dull, dead sound of the words which starts difficulties and doubts. Prayers for the living after death; prayers for those who have passed through the 'grave and gate of death'; prayers for those who 'live unto Him'; prayers for the 'Faithful Departed'—such expressions sound reasonable enough, and it is no true instinct which allows us to pray for souls up to the moment of their departure, and forbids us to pray for the same souls the moment after it. 'At such a moment we do not argue about Prayers for the Dead, we pray them.'

Think of the instinct of a child. Princess Alice tells us how that when her little child Frittie had been called to rest, the moment came for his younger brother to say his prayers. 'Ernie always prays for Frittie' she writes, and wise woman that she was, Frittie's mother refused to stop him.

And intellect agrees with instinct. Pass from the instinct of the little child to the intellect of one of the first brains of our generation—that of Bishop Stubbs, late Bishop of Oxford. Listen to his belief, expressed in deliberately chosen language,

at the end of a long life of trained and balanced thought. 'I believe,' he writes in a *Visitation Charge*, 'that it is legally recognised that to pray for the dead is not forbidden in the Church of England. The idea recommends itself very strongly to the hearts and affections of a great number of good Christian people. Prayers for the Dead are not open to exoteric objection, for, as we know nothing whatever about the exact condition of the Departed until the Day of Judgment, and cannot dream of limiting by our ignorance the possible action of the Lord of Life regarding them, there is nothing conceivably to be objected to in addressing the Almighty Lord in Whose hands they are, in prayers to which He will assuredly give such weight as they may deserve.'[1] These are great words coming from a great man, and are as true to our instinct as the utterance of the little child. Or, listen to the present Bishop of Bristol. 'Prayer for the dead is,' he writes, 'pious, comforting, primitive; a thing full of Christian consolation, of which our Anglo-Saxon forefathers laid hold so completely that in one runic inscription after another, the inscription ends with the words: "Pray for the soul" . . . As we, up to the moment of their death, pray for friends and relatives, so we do not

[1] *Visitation Charges*, p. 332.

cease to engage in that Comforting Communion when they have passed away.'[1] The present Bishop of London, speaking of the form of notice in which Prayers for the Departed should be asked in Church, says : 'The form of such notices, which I believe to be the right form, according to ancient practice, is "Let us remember before God the faithful Departed, and especially the friend whom we commemorate at the time."' The weighty opinions of such present-day authorities are helpful.

But, granted all this, are Prayers for the Dead, it is asked, and asked quite fairly by some to whom this series is addressed, allowed by the 'law of the land'?—or, if you prefer the phrase, by 'the Church of England as by law established'? Waiving for our present purpose all discussion on the historic meaning of the phrase, we will at once give a direct and authoritative reply to the question.

During the South African War, the Archbishop of Canterbury[2] put forth a Prayer for the Dead, containing the words, 'And for all those who have fallen, that they, with us, may enter into that rest which Thou hast prepared for those who believe in Thee.'

[1] *Church Historical Society. Continuity of the Holy Catholic Church in England*, p. 13. [2] Archbishop Temple.

In the House of Lords, on Friday, March 9, 1900, Lord Kinnaird asked the Archbishop whether any precedent could be found since the Reformation Settlement in which Prayers for the Dead had ever been introduced 'by authority' into any special services put forth by any of the Archbishops of Canterbury? The Archbishop's reply was as straight from the shoulder as we should expect any reply from Archbishop Temple to be. 'I hold in my hand,' he said, 'two documents. . . . One of them is a "form of Prayer and Thanksgiving to Almighty God to be used in all Churches and Chapels for general thanksgiving for many and signal victories which Divine Providence has vouchsafed to His Majesty in the course of the war." The date of this is 1797. . . . I will just read the words that your Lordships may know what the words are to which I refer . . . "And for those for whom in this righteous cause Thy Providence permits to fall, receive we pray Thee their souls to Thy mercy." That prayer was issued in the usual way; . . . and again in the same manner a year later, on November 29, 1798.' And then, after some words we will quote later, the Archbishop (speaking of course not of private but of *public*, *authorised* prayers) added: 'Of course I am aware that Prayers for the Dead are not common in the

Church of England, and that such prayers have been struck out altogether from the ordinary services, but, nevertheless, it is quite certain that the law has decided that such prayers are not outside the limits of the law. We have had the question settled before the regular Court, and that settlement has been acquiesced in ever since it was arrived at, now more than sixty years ago. Moreover, that settlement is based on the same principle as that which underlies the well-known decision in the case of Mr. Bennett. There the Judges refused to condemn Mr. Bennett on the ground that the doctrine he taught was not prohibited by the Church of England. The principle of the law is therefore accepted. The law itself and the rule of the law which is laid down by the Court of Arches in regard to Prayers for the Dead leave the matter in this position—that there is no prohibition, and it is quite open to members of the Church of England to pray for the dead.'

The Archbishop then explains the reason why the Church of England struck out many of the much abused Prayers for the Dead from her authorised, and public offices. 'The reason is clear from the circumstances of the Reformation. At that time Prayers for the Dead were almost entirely taken up

with prayers for souls in purgatory, and these . . . were the source of very scandalous abuses . . . At that time it was very difficult to draw any line, and the Church took the course of striking out all prayers that could possibly be abused without any reference to the question whether or not they would be abused. But the Church did not in any way forbid the use of Prayers for the Dead which it could very easily have done, and in the 22nd Article of the Church could have excluded Prayers for the Dead altogether. But the Church did not do that, and when the Judges had to decide whether or not such prayers were excluded, they decided distinctly that they were not excluded.'[1] It may be noted in confirmation of the Archbishop's words, that, when the Articles were under discussion, a rough draft was prepared containing a condemnation of Prayers for the Dead, and that this was omitted in every authenticated edition of the Articles both in English and Latin.[2] To all who knew the man, the Archbishop's speech will appeal with the added and living force that the knowledge suggests. It is something in these days for an Archbishop to embody such sentences as

[1] *Hansard*, vol. lxxx. pp. 467-469.

[2] Pullan, *The Book of Common Prayer* (Oxford Library of Practical Theology).

follow in a speech made in such an assembly as a modern House of Lords :—

'What is to happen after our death and before the Resurrection is not known distinctly; it is not anywhere told us in the New Testament. We really do not know, but we do receive some idea that those, who have followed the true faith, are, during that interval, to have happiness so far that they are in the presence of God, but are still waiting for that great change which will come to all. The prayer looks forward to that time. . . . The only objection I have ever heard made to this is that when they have entered into that rest, when once they have passed into the Hands of God, it is impossible that they can have any addition to their happiness. Well, there is nothing in the New Testament that implies that their happiness is always exactly the same, and that there is no possibility of increase; but there is in the New Testament sufficient to lead us to the belief that, at any rate, there is one thing that can increase their happiness—that is, that they should be reunited with those whom they loved on earth, and so the prayer is not simply that they may enter into rest, but that they, with us, may enter into rest, and the idea of reunion with those whom they loved here is the very essence of the petition. . .

The idea which is very often expressed that those who are happy need no addition at all would imply that it is a matter of indifference to them whether the loved ones left behind did or did not join them. This prayer expresses no such idea, but a precisely opposite idea—that they, with us, may have that great blessing in common.'

One more passage from the Archbishop's speech will apply to all times:—'At this time there are hundreds of sorrowing souls very anxious about relations engaged in the war in South Africa. They have been praying for their loved ones out there, and they feel it is hard that they may not have the comfort of praying for those who have fallen when they know, as a great many of them do know, that Prayers for the Dead are not forbidden.'

Such words are strong words to use in the House of Lords, and they come from a strong man—a man strong enough to end his speech thus: 'We ought to show in dealing with the Church that we have no intention whatever of narrowing its limits, or shutting out from any liberty which the Church has granted the desires of those who feel the need of using such liberty.'

This speech has been quoted at some length, not because it registers the opinion of the Court of Arches, whose verdict on such a matter,

though not without its evidential value, will not appeal strongly to many; but partly because it is well to recall and record such words from the Archbishop, and partly because the words may set at rest the minds of some who really and honestly do want to know whether, on such a matter, the law of the Church and the law of the land are at one. There are, not only in war time but always 'hundreds of sorrowing souls' longing to follow their natural instincts to pray for their dead, but who are honestly uncertain whether it is right, or who have been cruelly told that the Church of England separates herself from the rest of Catholic Christendom, and forbids them to do so. Such may find help and hope in the Archbishop's words.

Any appeal to the voice of antiquity or to the belief of the Early Church has been purposely omitted here. Book after book has been written, giving us an unbroken *catena* of authorities who commend and defend a practice in union with the belief of the universal Church, to which any reader may refer at will. The object in view has been merely to add to these many voices the words of some whom we ourselves have known and trusted. It is but the same story in other words. John Wesley's answer, when challenged to defend the practice, was right when he said that such prayers

were perfectly justifiable according to the earliest antiquity and the Church of England.[1]

It has been said that 'inscriptions on tombstones asking for Prayers for the Departed are not allowed in the Church of England.' The assertion has drawn from Dr. Wickham Legg a reply which is still unanswered. 'The matter,' he writes in a *Church Historical Society* Pamphlet, 'has been before the Ecclesiastical Courts, and it was ruled that such inscriptions were not illegal, as by no canon or authority of the Church in these realms has the practice of praying for the dead been expressly prohibited. The inscription in question was, *Pray for the soul of J. Woolfrey.* Such inscriptions are perfectly legal, and may be used, with the consent of the Authorities, by any desiring so to use them.'

But, clear as is the permission to pray for the Dead, we have to admit how easily the practice can be abused, and how the whole science of prayer can be reduced to a mere matter of money and arithmetic, if not to an absurdity.[2] We know how often questions of 'finance' have tainted the teaching on Prayers for the Departed. There have been times when a scale of fees has been

[1] Luckock's *After Death*, p. 247.
[2] See note at end of chapter.

drawn up, and so much officially charged for so many official prayers. Such methods have thrown contempt on the whole practice. A reaction was inevitable. But we must be careful not to let an exaggerated abuse deprive us of the legitimate use of a natural and permitted devotion.

Two questions suggest themselves as the natural outcome of such teaching. When should we pray for the Dead, and what should we ask for them?

As to When? 'Although we ought at all times' to include them in our prayers, yet, as ancient liturgies suggest, more especially should we do so at the Blessed Sacrament. Bishop Heber tells us what his own personal habit was. 'I myself have been in the habit for some years of recommending on some occasions, as after receiving the Sacrament, . . . my lost friends by name to God's goodness and compassion through His Son, as what can do them no harm, and may, and I hope will, be of some service to them.' Dr. Bright, late Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Oxford, agrees; and all who value his opinion will care to remember his words: 'There can be no doubt that the custom of including the Departed in the Prayers of the Faithful is of the most primitive antiquity, and that our particular way of making such prayers

in connection with the Eucharistic Sacrifice . . . is mentioned as among Church usages by Tertullian about 200 A.D. There is good reason to believe that this was among the practices of Synagogue worship, and of Jewish life when our Lord was upon earth. From the Synagogue it passed over naturally, and as of course, into the Church, and I cannot doubt into the Church of Apostolic times.'[1] It is when we are met together in the Communion of the Holy Eucharist that we seem of all times nearest to those who are taking part in the same great act of worship in the more immediate presence of the Lamb. As a sweet singer in our English Church has sung—and surely still sings—of one departed in the faith:

'Tis then I feel how near thou art,
Thy face I almost see
When in the Eucharist I touch
The Hand that touches Thee.

Then, indeed, we feel something of the meaning of the words of S. Cyril of Jerusalem; 'We offer this sacrifice in memory of all those who are fallen asleep before us . . . believing it will be a very great advantage to the souls for whom supplication is put up.'

[1] *Letters and Memoir of William Bright*, pp. 130, 131.

And what shall we ask for them? Dr. Bright would reply: 'But as to what we specially intend, we pray that God . . . would give them all the blessings that their state admits of. It is a state of rest and light, but of imperfect happiness. We can pray that this rest and light may be increased —that the time of their final bliss may be hastened; and that they may be publicly accepted by Christ at the last day. Reasons enough here if you believe as we believe and love as we love. . . . Enough to believe that, in some way or other, we may contribute to increase the happiness of those prayed for.'[1]

Perhaps, in actual words, it is best to keep as near as possible to Church words. We may safely make our own words such as those from the Liturgy of S. James: 'Remember, O Lord God, the spirits of all flesh . . . Do Thou Thyself give them rest in the delights of Paradise, in the bosoms of our holy fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whence sorrow, grief, and lamentations are banished away.' Or, following the leading of such liturgies, we may use words from our own English 1549 Prayer Book: 'Graunte we beseche Thee that at the day of judgment his soule, and all the soules of Thy electe,

[1] *Letters and Memoir of William Bright*, p. 131.

departed out of this life, may with us, and we with them, fully receive Thy promises, and be made perfect altogether throw the glorious resurrection of Thy Sonne Jesus Christ our Lorde.' Or, we may follow the wording of our present Prayer Book and pray for an increase of that 'joy and felicity' which we ask twice a day for our King when we pray that 'after this life he may enjoy everlasting joy and felicity,' and when we pray for a sick child asking that he may be received 'where the souls of them that sleep in the Lord Jesus enjoy perpetual rest and felicity.'[1] Or, we may pray in the words which Cranmer retained in the first draft of his English Burial Service: 'Grant unto this Thy servant that the sins which he committed in this world be not imputed to him.' Or again, we may pray the short safe prayer of the past, using it as an ejaculatory prayer at all times and seasons, *Requiem Aeternam dona ei, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat ei*: 'Eternal rest grant him, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon him.' Rest and Light! We are quite safe here.

Rest! 'The uniform practice of the earliest ages of the Church, as testified by the liturgies, was the commendation of the Faithful Departed to

[1] *Visitation of the Sick. Prayer for a sick child.*

God for an increase of their rest and peace.' One is grateful to Mr. Gladstone for such a sentence. It is in accord with what Wordsworth calls

> The universal instinct of repose,
> The longing for confirmed tranquillity.

'Rest' is, of course, a many-sided word. Even here our ideas of rest differ strangely, and we must not confine the thought merely to our earthly ideas. The rest longed for by the invalid who is craving for work is the very opposite to the rest desired by the sweated seamstress, or the man whose life is one long round of work and worry. We ask for our Departed rest in whatever form they need it, leaving it to Him who said 'Come unto Me, and I will give you rest' to interpret the word. Leisure *for* work rather than leisure *from* work is one form of the rest which some of us most look for. We hope for leisure to study problems which our new powers will enable us better to grasp; leisure to leave less undone; leisure to contribute our individual quota to the well-being of the whole Body; leisure for uninterrupted thought, and leisure for thought without the fear of interruption—that fear which the late Bishop Stubbs, after he became Bishop of Oxford, used to say paralysed the power of consecutive thought. Certainly, it is not the rest of

idleness that we beg for our Departed. Rather it is the rest which revives and strengthens for more labour, the rest which empowers endless work for God without tire or break, the rest in work of which Mrs. Kingsley wrote: 'It is a spring of joy to me, ever since my husband died, to know that he will never more be tired, never again overworked.' True, they will 'rest from their labours,' but how little the words convey to us! Here, there is often no harder work than to rest from labours; no greater rest than labour. Rest and labour will not be eternal contradictions; rather they will be eternal correlations. Neither is really complete without the other. Rest without work tires as much as work without rest. All earthly rest has in it the element of restlessness. We ask for the Dead 'May they rest *in peace*.' 'Eternal rest grant them O Lord'—the rest which is full of change, yet ever the same; the rest of those of whom it is written: 'They rest not day nor night' from His perfect service.

And Light! Think of tired workers dying daily in dark and dismal dens. Think of the multitudes of sunless lives, of human beings living and dying without any gleam of that happiness which we longed to give them. Think of the dim intellects of those we call great thinkers, stumbling into some

tiny ray of truth, and dying in the mere twilight of discovery. 'Let light perpetual shine upon them' —not fitful light, gleams coming and going, discoveries vanishing in the light of new discoveries, light succeeded by spells of darkness and ignorance; but 'light perpetual,' steady, persistent, 'shining more and more unto the perfect Day.' Think too, of the beauty which comes from light, even from created light—its colouring, its shadows, its startling surprises; and then think of the beauties of Paradise which Light ineffable, Light uncreate, will eternally make manifest. If we endeavour to grasp the mere elementary result of the *fiat*, 'Let there be light,' and then try to forecast what the 'light perpetual' will mean, we can but 'cover our eyes' at the bare thought of the vision of beauty. To many of us, some such prayer includes all that we want when we pray for the Dead.

Be our prayers what they may, the fact remains that Prayers for the Faithful Departed are part of our Catholic inheritance, and the Blessed Dead have a claim upon them. The prayers of the Living are the dues of the Dead. And apart from all argument and authority, we find ourselves to-day in the position of the early Christian of whom Dr. Bright says: 'But to what end would the

early Christian thus pray? I think he would have said: we cannot help doing so.'

Note (p. 133).—In a chapter on the subject written by a Jesuit Priest,[1] and full of many helpful and beautiful thoughts, we have a wearisome specimen. He is speaking of praying for the remission of sins for the Departed, and says: 'A little arithmetic will give us a great insight into this matter. The just man is said to sin seven times a day, wherefore we may easily allow thrice more a day to one of those whom we call good and honest men, such as the world has but few of; such a man, therefore, as this is, doth sin (venially) ten times a day, taking one day with another. The days in a whole year are 365; wherefore, he who every day sinneth ten times, must at the year's end have sinned ten times as often as there be days in a year; which sum is easily found out by putting one cypher to the number of days in the year which are 365: add now one cypher and we shall have 3650. So that the sins of this good man even in one year come to no less than 3650. But'—so he quaintly adds—'if this good man should live, even in this good manner, ten years, he should at ten years' end have committed the former sum ten times, because he doth double it every year; which sum also is easily had by adding one cypher to the former sum of 3650, which if we do, we find 36,500. What a thing is this? An innocent man, not a man but a youth, doth commit 36,500 sins all in ten years: wherefore if the youth should for ten more years continue this his virtuous course of life, he would double the sins of his former life, and make them amount to 73,000 before he came to be a middle-aged man.' From all this arithmetic he deduces the necessity of 'prayers for the righteous departed.' Could anything be more tire-

[1] Father Mumford, S.J., *A Remembrance for the Living to Pray for the Dead.*

some? Could anything do more to destroy the beauty and simplicity of the devotion? 'Let us reflect,' he goes on, 'before we go any further, what kind of purgatory this man—a man not fully of middle age, a man very pious, a man who never committed one mortal sin—would be liable to if he should die at this age; for perhaps of those 73,000 sins, he hath not fully satisfied for the odd 3000. . . . Now what a Purgatory, think you, 70,000 sins will deserve' and so on. Could anything be more worrying? Could anything be less inspiring?

CHAPTER X

THE SIN OF SADNESS

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Grief hears a funeral knell: Hope hears the ringing
Of birthday bells on high;
Faith, Hope, and Love make answer with soft singing,
Half carol and half cry. *Christina Rossetti.*

It is perfectly true that the Blessed Dead are often forgotten with a startling rapidity—a rapidity which shows the small hold that the unseen really has upon the senses. 'Visitations' are, as we have seen in the case of the Boer War, and of epidemics, strangely evanescent. Of some souls, a great master of the spiritual life has told us that 'the heaviest sorrow leaves upon their hearts but a shallow, and short-lived impress of the intermediate state. For awhile, their affections follow the departing spirit, and, it may be, they think their hearts will never return to this rough world, but dwell within the veil for ever. In a little time the first visions of the realities unseen, be they never so vivid, begin

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 13.

to fade into a colder light; and realities soften off into shadows, and shadows melt into films, and from films they draw themselves into motes; . . . and it is not too much to say, that, in a little while, they have forgotten the dead.' It is a common enough experience, in the bewildering rush and noise of the world of sense. But in others there is an opposite tendency. They profess to believe, and do believe, all that the Church teaches about the state of the Faithful Departed, and yet they allow themselves an indulgence in uncontrolled and un-Christian mourning for the Dead which seems strangely at variance with the Christian Creed. Such not infrequently spoil the lives of those about them, and injure their faith in the eyes of unbelievers. This is the charge which S. Cyprian brought against the Christians in Carthage in the third century. He tells them plainly that the effect of their un-Christian sadness is to make the heathen rightly blame them for mourning, as annihilated and lost, those of whom they say that they are 'alive with the Lord.'

This hint to the early Christians is not wholly unneeded to-day. It is, of course, true that we do not mourn so much for the departed as for ourselves. For them—so that they die in grace—

death has its 'good tidings of great joy.' Like Dürer's knight, they hear him as a messenger who has brought pleasant news; or, like S. Francis of Assisi, they go 'to meet death singing.' For the dead, we grieve not; our tablet for them is the tablet in the Catacombs which records the death of Eutychia, as 'Eutychia happiest of women.' It is said that one of the old Crusaders died of joy at the sight of Jerusalem. We, on the contrary, believe that the sight of Paradise will bring new life. With Plato, we can say of our dead: 'I did not weep for him, but for my own future in being deprived of such a friend'; or, with Michael Angelo, in his letter to Vasari, after the death of Urbino: 'You know how Urbino died: it is a mark of God's great goodness, yet a bitter grief to me.' It was not this natural, human, right sorrow at the loss of deprivation which S. Cyprian was girding at. We may, indeed, underrate the value of this sorrow, as, perhaps, Leonardo da Vinci underrated it when he wrote: 'I do not think that Leonardo [his nephew] ought to have such rejoicing over a new-born child. This joy ought to be kept for the death of a man who has lived well.' There is, of course, a sad side to death which we are not meant to shirk, and without which we should suffer loss. S. Ambrose, writing of the death of his brother Satyrus, says:

'But we have not incurred any grievous sin by our tears. Not all weeping proceeds from unbelief or weakness. Natural grief is one thing, distrustful sadness is another, and there is a very great difference between longing for what you have lost and lamenting that you have lost it. Tears then are marks of devotion, not producers of grief. I confess that I too wept, but the Lord also wept. He wept for one not related to Him, I for my brother. He wept for all in weeping for one, I will weep for thee in all, my brother. He wept for what affected us, not Himself; for the Godhead sheds no tears; but He wept in that nature in which He was sad.'[1] 'Between times, we must have some sad days,' says Lacordaire, and death with its consequences brings one of them. It is, we know, quite possible to become one-sided, and to lose the grace of discipline by failing to see the sad. Ruskin tells of a false way of looking even at the bright side of things—of looking 'on one side only, when God has given them two sides, and intended us to see both.' It was the sin of one-sided sadness that Cyprian discredited. It was the brooding, self-inclosed grief that he reproved. It was the sin of a 'Rachel mourning for her children and refusing to be com-

[1] *On the decease of Satyrus*, Bk. i., § 10.

forted because they are not,' while all the time professing the Catholic belief 'that they are,' and 'are with God' that he condemned. It was the grief of those to whom Christ's death had made no real difference in their view of the departed, forgetful that

> He Himself passed, mild and majestical,
> Through death's black gate, whose inner side none saw
> Before He set it wide, golden and glad.

It was a warning to those who, however unintentionally, gave cause for the heathen to say, 'Where is now their God?' It was a caution to those who seemed to treat the next world as a gloomy under-world—as the wife of the High Priest of Memphis, at the close of the first century before the Christian era, treated it:

> The under-world is a land of thick darkness,
> A sorrowful place for the dead.
> They sleep after their guise, never awaken,
> And behold their comrades.[1]

Thus S. Ambrose writes: 'So, then, my tears shall cease, for one must yield to healthful remedies, since there ought to be some difference between believers and unbelievers. Let him therefore weep who cannot have the hope of the resur-

[1] Cf. Sayce, *Religions of Ancient Egypt.*

rection. Let there be this difference between the servants of Christ and the worshippers of idols, that the latter weep for their friends, whom they suppose to have perished for ever; that they should never cease from tears, and gain no rest from sorrow, who think that the dead have no rest. But for us, for whom death is not the end of our nature, but of this life only, since our nature itself is restored to a better state, let the advent of death wipe away all tears.'

This was the grief which S. Cyprian was reproving. There are cases in which the un-Christian grief of Christians is the very poison which is killing their lives, making them a blight on the lives of others, and strengthening the doubts of non-believers. What is the root of it all? No doubt it is selfishness in some form, and perhaps in one special form. It may be that, in spite of our Creed, we are selfishly dwelling on our own memory of the dead, rather than on their present living fellowship with us. We think of what they were, rather than what they are. We look back too exclusively to their lives with us in the flesh, and too little to their communion with us now. We forget their closeness, a closeness of which Fénelon wrote, when Beauvilliers was taken from him, 'We come a long step nearer to him every day. He whom we

can no longer see is closer to us than before. We meet him continually in our common centre, God.'[1] We may, we must, look back and thank God for all that they then were, or plead with Him to make them different from what they were,—but we must allow neither the beauty nor the burden of the past to let us fall into the sin of sadness. There is no defence for unhealthy brooding. The less we think of them as a past memory, the more we dwell on their present 'joy and felicity,' on the help they are to us now, on their ardent desire for our arrival, the less will this selfish brooding take hold of our lives.

Again, is it not possible our sadness may be affecting their happiness? May not this be one of our sins that they are mourning over as they see, if they see, the harm we are doing to ourselves and the Faith? The thought is suggested very simply in a poem by William Barnes, the Dorsetshire poet (1801-1886), writing of the death of a little child—one of those little ones born to die, of whom it is said

> The mother greets the child with parting kiss.

A mother dreams that she sees her own dead child, joining in a procession of happy children in the

[1] Viscount St. Cyres' *Fénelon*, p. 299.

'Children's Kingdom.' Each child carries a lighted lamp—lighted in honour of the Children's King. One lamp alone is dim, one child's joy alone is damped. It is that of her own child. And why? The poem provides the answer:—

I 'd a dream to-night
As I fell asleep;
Oh! the touching sight
Makes me still to weep,
Of my little lad
Gone to leave me sad.
Ah! the child I had
But was not to keep.

As in Heaven high
I my child did seek,
There in train came by
Children fair and meek
With a lamp alight,
Each in lily white,
Each was clear to sight,
But they did not speak.

Then, a little sad,
Came my child in turn,
But the lamp he had,
O! it did not burn.
He to clear my doubt
Said, half-turn'd about:
'Your tears put it out,
Mother, never mourn.'[1]

'Your tears put it out.' It is, at least, a parable

[1] *Mater Dolorosa.*

of the possible. The same thought is expressed by Longfellow in *Hiawatha*:—

> We are ghosts of the departed,
> Souls of those who once were with you,
> From the realms of Chibiabos.
> Hither have we come to try you,
> Hither have we come to warn you.
> Cries of grief and lamentation
> Reach us in the Blessed Islands;
> Cries of anguish from the living
> Calling back their friends departed,
> Sadden us with useless sorrow.
> Therefore have we come to try you;
> No one knows us, no one heeds us,
> We are but a burden to you,
> And we see that the departed
> Have no place among the living.
> Think of this, O Hiawatha!
> Speak of it to all the people,
> That henceforward and for ever
> They no more with lamentations
> Sadden the souls of the departed
> In the Islands of the Blessed.

There is a fine passage on Dr. Arnold's death, in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, which must have appealed to many. Tom has heard of his old master's death, and has just come to visit his old school. And, oh, his sorrow! If only he could have seen him for five minutes to tell him all his love and reverence, and all that he owed to him. 'And now he will never know it. . . . But am I sure,' thinks Tom, 'that he

does not know it all? May he not even be near me in this very chapel? If he be, *am I sorrowing as he would have me sorrow*—as I should wish to have sorrowed when I shall meet him again?' And then he begins to think of the grief of others as well as of his own, 'and the grief which he began to share with others became gentle and holy.' In the hour of death natural sorrow and supernatural joy must be intertwined, lest we, perchance, cause grief to those we love.

S. Jerome, writing to his old friend, Heliodorus, to console him for the death of his nephew, expresses this twofold aspect of joy and sadness thus: 'Where is he, the impeller of my work, whose voice was sweeter than a swan's last song? My mind is dazed, my hand trembles, a mist covers my eyes, stammering seizes my tongue. My pen seems to feel his loss, my very wax tablet looks dull and sad . . . my eyes fill with tears . . . I can think of nothing but his death . . . what shall I do then? Shall I join my tears to yours? The Apostle forbids me, for he speaks of dead Christians as of "them that are asleep" . . . No! I will be glad and rejoice that "speedily he was taken away lest that wickedness should alter his understanding," for "his soul pleased the Lord" (Wisd. iv. 11, 14). . . . Set a limit, I pray you, to your sorrow, and

remember the saying, "In nothing overmuch." . . . Do not grieve that you have lost such a paragon; rejoice rather that he has once been yours.'[1]

And S. Basil again, to the same effect: 'Above all . . . it is God's command that we who trust in Christ should not grieve over them who are fallen asleep, because we hope in the resurrection; and that in reward for great patience great crowns of glory are kept in store by the Master of life's course. Only let us allow our wiser thoughts to speak to us in this strain of music, and we may peradventure discover some slight alleviation of our trouble. Play the man, then, I implore you; the blow is a heavy one, but stand firm; do not lose heart. Be perfectly assured of this, that though the reasons for what is ordained by God are beyond us, yet always what is arranged for us by Him who is wise and who loves us is to be accepted, be it ever so grievous to endure. He Himself knows *how* He is appointing what is best for each, and why the terms of life that He fixes for us are unequal. So we ought always to adore His loving kindness, and not to repine, remembering those great and famous words of the great athlete, Job, when he had seen ten children at one table, in one short

[1] *Letter to Heliodorus*, lx. 'Library of the Nicene and Ante-Nicene Fathers.'

moment crushed to death, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." Let us adopt those marvellous words. We have not lost the lad, we have restored him to the Lender. . . . He has outstripped us on the way, but we shall travel the same road, and the same hostelry awaits us all.'[1]

And once more, the same S. Basil, writing to console a lady on the death of her husband, says: 'Turn now your thoughts from the present to the future, that you may be worthy . . . to obtain a place of rest like his. Spare an aged mother; spare a tender daughter, to whom you are now the sole comfort. Be an example of fortitude to other women, and so regulate your grief that you may neither eject it from your heart, nor be overwhelmed by your distress.'[2]

Both views are liturgically explained and united in the Church's ancient Burial Offices, as in our own. There is a note of sadness, because death is the penalty for sin; but the predominant note is one of quiet joy. First there is the sadness of 'earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust'; then there is the joy and gladness of 'sure and certain hope.' First there is the solemn committal of the body to God's

[1] Letter v. *To Nectarius.* Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, p. 113.

[2] Letter cclx. To the wife of Arinthæus. Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, p. 307.

keeping, and then the prayer and praise in which the departed is recognised as still being a member of Christ's Church. Christian burials should have in them both notes, but it is the Eucharistic rather than the saddened note which should prevail. There is even a greater joy in the 'thankful remembrance of His death,' and of our death in Him, than there is in the sad sorrow for sin which made His death necessary. 'The ancient Burial Office is not,' Bishop Harvey Goodwin writes, 'the language of those who mourn and lament for the dead; there is no weeping or wailing in it; the prayer breathes the spirit not of disappointment and failure, but of joy and triumph and solemn exultation. It is, in fact, the main and central portion of a service, which is Eucharistic throughout, and which closes with the most exultant of Christian hymns. The exultant character of the Liturgy, and the fact that its essential feature is the celebration of the Lord's death, should ever be borne in mind by those who wish to estimate the importance of the word *dead* in the Apostles' Creed.'[1] And so S. Chrysostom: 'The Christians used hymns and Psalmody at funerals, chosen to express joy and thanksgiving, not sorrow as of men without hope.' Dean Plumptre

[1] *The Foundations of the Creed*, pp. 161, 162.

writes of the funerals of the early Church: 'The Christian Church gave to the funeral procession somewhat of the character of a triumph. Those who took part in it carried in their hands branches of palm and olive, as those who celebrated victory. They strewed over the body leaves of laurel and ivy, the emblems of immortality; they carried lighted lamps or torches in like token of Christian joy; fragrant clouds of incense rose, as in a Roman triumph. They did not march in sad silence to the grave . . . but they chanted as they went hymns of hope and joy. The "hearty thanks" which we give to God at the grave for the deliverance of our departed friends out of the miseries of this sinful world are, as it were, a faint echo of those old funeral anthems and psalms of the early Church.'[1]

So again, in regard to the torches carried at Christian funerals, they were symbols of joy—'joyous torches' as S. Chrysostom calls them. Whereas the heathen were buried by night, Christians were buried by day (save in hours of persecution), and lights were carried in the daytime to express their joy that the departed were taken to rest. It is related that when the body of S. Chrysostom was translated from Comana to Constantinople, 'the sea of Bosporus was covered

[1] Smith's *Dict. of Antiq.*, 253.

with torches.' Bingham thus describes the meaning of the symbol: 'they are used to signify respect and honour to the deceased as a victorious combatant who had conquered the world here below, and now gone to take possession of a better world above.'[1]

The twofold note must still sound at every funeral, and in every home, but the Redemption demands that the Alleluia of triumph shall be louder than the Amen of resignation. In primitive times a funeral was always associated with the Holy Eucharist. And associated it is still. Queen Elizabeth in her Injunctions commanded that the Eucharist should be celebrated at funerals. Our 1549 Prayer Book had at the end of the Burial Office an Introit, Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, headed the 'The Celebration of the Holy Communion when there is a burial of the dead.' Indeed, it is possible that the Burial Office is really part of a Eucharistic one. It may even have been the root-idea of Church Festivals. Tertullian seems to think that the celebration of the Eucharist at the burial of Martyrs and at their tombs on the anniversaries of the day of their death was the origin of Saints' Days.[2]

Thus joy distinguished the Christian from

[1] Smith's *Dict. of Antiq.*, xxiii. 2, vi.
[2] Cf. Blunt, *Annotated Prayer Book.*

the heathen burial. As Jeremy Taylor wrote: 'The Church in her funerals of the dead used to sing Psalms, and to give thanks for the redemption and delivery of the soul from the evils and dangers of Mortality. And therefore we have no reason to be angry when God hears our prayers who call upon Him to hasten His coming, and to fill up His members, and to do that which we pretend to give Him thanks for. And it is worse still when people grow troublesome because their friend is happy, or themselves want his company.' And S. Chrysostom: 'To what purpose is it that thou singest, *Return unto thy rest*, etc., if thou dost not believe thy friend to be at rest? and if thou dost, why dost thou weep importunately and unreasonably? Nothing but our own loss can be justly deplored, and therefore we have no reason to love the immoderate sorrows of those who too earnestly mourn for their dead—the best that can be said for such a grief is that those mourners love themselves too well.' It was in this spirit, and not in the spirit of unlove, that S. Augustine wrote of the burial of Monica: 'And, behold! the corpse was carried to burial: we went and returned without tears. For not even then did I weep in those prayers which we poured forth unto Thee when the Sacrament of our ransom was offered for her,

as the manner is, while the corpse was by the side of the grave, previous to being laid therein.'[1]

Such, too, is the teaching of the Russian Church. There is a very beautiful thought in the office for the Burial of a Babe in the *Book of Needs*. The translation runs: 'Master, Thou King of all, who from on high didst send and take the happy babe as a pure bird to heavenly nest, Thou hast from divers snares preserved his soul, and joined it with the righteous souls Thy Kingdom's sweets to taste . . . and now taking the babe to Thee, do Thou Thyself alleviate the parents' pain, as all-compassionate and lover of mankind.' And, again: 'Death is the freeing of the babes, for unparticipants of ills of life they are declared, and unto rest attain; and they with heavenly joys are glad, and now along with holy babes in choirs divine rejoice, and festal high in faith they keep; for from corruption through love of sin, they, being pure, translated are.' And a no less beautiful prayer before they go to the grave follows: 'O Lord, who guardest babes in the life that now is, and in the world to come preparest for them a home, and, for their purity, bright angelic places where the souls of the righteous are established; do Thou Thyself, O Lord Christ, accept in peace the soul of Thy

[1] S. Augustine, *Confess.*, ix. 11, 12.

servant, the babe (*name*). For thou hast said: "Suffer the children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." For to Thee is due all glory and worship with the Father and the Holy Ghost now and ever and to ages of ages, Amen.' And repeatedly throughout the office comes: 'Rest Thou the babe, O Lord.' The same thought runs through all burial services of the Holy Orthodox Church. Thus, in *The Mortuary Order over a Departed Priest* words are put into the lips of the dead praying against the foe's last attack, 'as a bird be not my soul caught in their teeth,'—and then comes the *Troparion*: 'The eternal God whom thou hast served, thy soul hath placed in a bright and pleasant place where rest the just.' . . . 'On me death has come suddenly: but me translating, do Thou rest in places of refreshment.'[1]

If we are right, and if there is a tendency at times to indulge in a wrong and selfish grief, as well as to underrate the solemnity and sad side of death, we may well make S. Cyprian's words our own. The old native Christians of Sierra Leone may teach us a lesson. When there was a death, the mourners prepared for the interment,

[1] *The Book of Needs of the Holy Orthodox Church.* G. V. Shann (1894).

seated oriental fashion, in perfect silence. Then, in the lull of lamentation by the official weepers, one mourner said to another in the native tongue, 'Hush! God has done it! God is love.' There is our thought, 'Hush! God has done it.'

Grasping thus the mind of the Church, one can enter more fully into such thoughts as are suggested in the *Golden Legend* where Elsie says:—

> Weep not, my friends! rather rejoice with me;
> I shall not feel the pain, but shall be gone,
> And you will have another friend in Heaven.
> There is no more to say, Let us go in.[1]

[1] Longfellow's *Golden Legend*: vi. *The School of Salerno.*

CHAPTER XI

IMMORTALITY AND LOVE

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Affection is itself a kind of evidence. *Mozley.*

There is an evidential value in love. An appeal to the affections, as a proof of our Lord's Resurrection, or of our own immortality, may not, at first sight, seem to be a very strong one; yet it is a link which finds a place in the long chain of evidence for a future state.

In its proper position, love is a link we can ill spare. Love, it may be said, is not argument. But it may be something stronger than argument. It may be proof. 'We cannot,' writes Dr. Mozley, 'omit it when the evidence we deal with is the human soul itself. A want of the proper state of the affections must interfere with the full force of the understanding as a judge of the evidence, because it is only by means of these that we can lay hold of a human character, and see the reasons which there are for its immortality. Here, affection is part of insight,

it is wanted for gaining due acquaintance with the facts of the case. . . . Affection is itself a kind of evidence.'[1]

It is this appeal to love which the writer of the Fourth Gospel makes use of when recording the evidence of S. Mary Magdalen on the first Easter morning,—'evidence particularly adapted for showing how much affections have to do with a rational judgment upon religious questions.' A woman's affections are used by God as one of the many infallible proofs that Jesus rose from the dead. 'Mary stood by the Sepulchre weeping'—just a woman crying. She is not posing before the public, she is nothing to anybody, nobody cares for what she thinks, she has nothing to gain by pretending. In her unimportance lies the importance of her evidence. She knew from her own personal knowledge that He Who was everything to her, had been foully murdered—'crucified, dead, and buried.' She knew that the empty tomb was really 'the place where the body of Jesus had lain.' 'And Mary stood by the sepulchre weeping.' And then something happened; something which changed the whole course of the world's history, and turned that one woman's heaviness into joy. There is a footstep on the path. Turning herself

[1] Mozley, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 776.

about, she sees 'Him whom her soul loved.' Her tears veil her face, and she fails to recognise Him at first; but as the tears clear away, and 'the voice of the Beloved' speaks to her, ear and eye combine to recognise her lost Treasure. It is the evidence of a woman's love. True, there were experts, 'chosen witnesses,' whose evidence is of inestimable value; true, there were men of unquestioned intellectual capacity such as 'Thomas which is called Didymus'; true, there were practical business men such as 'Matthew the Publican,' who all 'saw and believed'; true, there were no fewer than five hundred witnesses, whose individual and united evidence any Law Court would accept as final: yet God the Holy Ghost willed to add a new and living link to the chain, by calling as evidence the witness of a woman's love. 'Mary.' 'Master.' No woman can be mistaken in the identity of the man she loves.

Love, then, is one element in our belief in a future. Love refuses to limit life to earth. What could be more dismally unnatural than such a limitation? Think of a wedding. Recall some real love match. Imagine the feelings of a bride and bridegroom, neither of whom believes in a future state. Each, as a matter of fact, knows that, in all human probability, one must die before the

other; that, however long they may live together, a separation must come at last; that in proportion to the reality of their earthly love will be the loneliness of the one left behind. Could anything be more dreary than such an outlook if there is no future, if there is no such thing as the Communion of Saints? Then indeed there is no answer to the sorrowful question which Margaret is made to ask Mephistopheles: 'What use is love, when death can shatter all?' 'I would choose to die unwed' is indeed the only comment she can make upon her own interrogation. Love pronounces that such a piteous failure is contrary to all reason, and reason owns that love is right. 'The man that has truly loved will never, unless it be in the aberration of despair, accept death as the final solution of the problem of existence.'

Again, how pathetically natural love clings to the very body of the departed in between death and burial! To the eye of sense, the closing of the coffin seems the end of all things. But love outlives sense. It is but a low kind of love that cannot reach beyond the earthy. Is there not something of dreariness, in spite of all its beauty, in the scene in which Wagner described Gudrun creeping to the side of Siegfried's dead body? He is dead; but he was the last of her kin and her only friend,

and to be near his dead body seems better than nothing. Better than nothing! yes! but love demands something more than that.

We may think of the evidential value of love in three ways.

(1) Love desires recognition. Mary Magdalen's recognition of the Risen Jesus was in accordance with the natural law of love—love which refuses to be confined within the bounds of the world of sense. It was a forecast in the flesh of recognition in the spirit. Love may, perhaps, throw some light on the likelihood of our recognising each other in the future life — either disembodied, or in our resurrection bodies. Obviously, we cannot assert or deny that of which we have no certain knowledge, but love surely assumes the likelihood of our knowing each other in a future state. Certainly the instinct of love predicated recognition in pre-Christian days. Homer shows us Ulysses, and Virgil shows us Æneas, upon their entrance into the other world, mutually recognising their old comrades and recognised by them. The two heroes whose inseparable friendship on earth was proverbial are still together in Elysium :—

> Then side by side along the dreary coast
> Advance Achilles and Patroclus' ghost
> A friendly pair.

In this representation there is a full recognition of acquaintances, and all accounts of the other world given in Greek and Roman literature harmonise with it.

The same is true in the literature of the ancient Hebrews. Thus the shades in the underworld are pictured by Isaiah as recognising the shade of the King of Babylon and rising from their sombre thrones to greet him with mockery.[1]

From the Christian standpoint, the story of Dives and Lazarus, whether parable or history, undoubtedly contains a definite hint of such recognition. The continuity of love, which a personal immortality postulates, practically demands personal recognition. Even on earth, our Lord bids the Apostles rise to the recognition of His personal identity after death: 'Behold and see it is I Myself.' Will He not bid others recognise in us a self-identity which love cannot mistake?

As to how the dead will recognise each other, we can form no adequate conception. Some have thought that the 'white robes'[2] given to the disembodied spirits suggest some external means whereby recognition may be possible; others have thought that we shall recognise each other in the Face of the Incarnate; others dream of

[1] Isa. xiv. 9. [2] Rev. vi. 11.

new powers of vision—'eyes before and behind.'[1] Others have thought that there will be some mysterious likeness to our present peculiarities.[2] It might seem not unnatural, though it is unscriptural, to infer that we shall know each other hereafter though the retention or recovery of those individual and physical peculiarities with which we are so familiar here.[3] Some have argued that the soul is a 'perfect reflection or immaterial facsimile of the body, and consequently at once recognisable in the disembodied state.' Others have thought that 'future recognition will be secured by the resurrection of the material body as it was in all its perfection, in renovated and unfading prime.' Our present bodies teach us that such conceptions are untenable. The outward form, features, and expression alter so thoroughly on earth that it is impossible for us to recognise our once most intimate companions. The trouble arising from this is well illustrated by Shakespeare in the motherly solicitude of Constance. When she learns that her young son has been imprisoned by his

[1] Rev. iv. 6.

[2] Tertullian even maintains that the soul has a corporeal nature with shape and form (*De Anima*, c. 9). Irenæus teaches that 'they even preserve the same form as had the body from which they received their shape' (*Contra Haer.* ii. 34. 1).

[3] *Life after Death.* Bishop Dahle, p. 130.

uncle, King John, and will probably pine to death, she cries in anguish to her confessor :—

> Father Cardinal, I have heard you say
> That we shall see and know our friends in Heaven ;
> If that be true, I shall see my boy again ;
> For, since the birth of Cain, the first male child,
> To him that did but yesterday suspire,
> There was not such a gracious creature born.
> But now will canker sorrow eat my bud
> And chase the native beauty from his cheek
> And he will look as hollow as a ghost,
> As dim and meagre as an ague's fit ;
> And so he 'll die : and rising so again
> When I shall meet him in the Court of Heaven
> I shall not know him : therefore never, never
> Must I behold my pretty Arthur more.[1]

Owing to the changes which take place, future recognition cannot safely depend upon this body or upon any resemblance of the spirit to it. Moreover, it is not only by our physical features that we recognise each other here. It is not merely by the bodily shape that we know each other but 'by the expression, the lights and shades reflected out from the immortal spirit shrined within. We know each other really by the mysterious motions of our souls. And these endure and act uninterrupted, though the fleshly frame alter a thousand times or dissolve in its native dust.' Our knowledge of each other being, in a sense, thus independent of

[1] *King John*, Act III. Scene 4.

the body, spirit may recognise spirit in the future state quite independently of any bodily presence. Who knows? It may be that love demands no media of communication.

Again, love longs to know the unknown—not merely those known on earth but all those who in past ages have fought for the faith. It yearns for the recognition of all who lived before, of all into whose labours we have entered. Love would recognise the Saints—'the glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, the Noble Army of Martyrs.' Will not Love find its satisfaction in the joy of recognition? Will it not be given to us, as it was given to the chosen three, to see and know some Moses and Elias on our Mount of Transfiguration? Who knows? God knows:—and if we know that God knows, we know all that we need to know.

(2) Love longs to be remembered. This longing in itself suggests a future state of existence. The inscription on Bishop Barrow's tombstone at St. Asaph expresses the thought: 'O ye that pass by into the House of the Lord, the House of Prayer, pray for your fellow-servant that he may find mercy in the day of the Lord.' The old legend of the Forget-me-not is true to life. A Knight and his fayre ladye—so runs the German

tale—are walking by the banks of the Danube. Looking down, the girl sees a bunch of blue flowers floating down the stream. Expressing a wish to have it, her mail-clad lover leaps into the river, and grasps the flowers. Weighed down by his armour, he cannot reclimb the slippery bank. With a last effort, he flings the flowers at his ladye's feet, crying out as he sinks 'Forget-me-not.' It illustrates love's desire to be remembered by those it has left behind. There was the same desire, however different its meaning, in the 'Lord, remember me' of the dying thief. How could he bear to believe he would be forgotten by Him on whom he had but just begun to lavish the passion of a pure white love?

We, too, on our side, deem it an honour to the dead to remember them. We are placing tablets on houses associated with those whom the nation wishes to remember. Thus on the house near the pier at Bournemouth where Mr. Keble breathed his last, the memorial tablet records: 'In this house John Keble, M.A., Vicar of Hursley, author of *The Christian Year*, entered into rest, March 29, 1866.'

Sir Frederick Treves, in 'The Garden of the Unforgotten,'[1] tells of the shrine of Nizam-ud-din, the greatest of all the Christian saints who

[1] *On both Sides of the Lantern*, p. 117.

died more than 250 years ago, and records it as a thing of beauty that his memory has never faded, and that his descendants still tend this 'most exquisite haven in the waste.' Another tomb he notices is that of the great Amir Khusran, who died 1324 and yet his memory is green to-day. 'Can there,' he asks, 'be any honour in the gift of man that can reach beyond the graciousness of this—to be still unforgotten after a stretch of some 600 years?'

We find the same teaching in the Form of Service, used once a quarter, on *Obiit Sunday*, in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. The legal obligation of Commemorating the Founders and Benefactors of St. George's, Windsor, has always been, and still is, observed. It is called a 'Form of Service for Obiit Sunday as ordered to be observed in St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, by Henry VIII., Edward VI., Queen Elizabeth, and Charles II., . . . and thenceforth observed until this present day'; and the Rubric runs that the Service—*In Commendationibus Benefactorum*—'once every quarter be evermore without fail duly observed.' A touching prayer, written in 1879 by the late Prince Imperial, expresses the same thought: 'If I forget those who are departed, I shall in my turn be forgotten. May I never give way to the sad suggestion that time effaces

everything!'[1] Who knows what joy the dead may find in the knowledge that they are remembered? May it not be part of their bliss to know the offices of those who are praying for them on earth? It may well be an added joy for those in Paradise to know who it is that prays for them, and how much they may gain by their prayers. Was it only for the sake of the survivors that the early Church bade her children 'remember before God' those that had departed hence in the Lord? May we not, perhaps, satisfy one desire of the Dead as we remember them before God? Forget-me-not is their mute cry. Love will dictate the response.

(3) Love Trusts. It is a poor love that cannot trust beyond the evidence of sense. Basing its faith on Revelation, and appealing to the universal teaching of the Church, love can trust its loved ones in the other world to a God of love: love commits them into the same Hands which held the Soul of Jesus on the first Good Friday. 'Father into Thy Hands.' The Father's Hands are the soul's chapel of repose. The Father's Hands symbolise trust. As we place our children, or our money, or our health, in the hands of one whom we trust, so we place our dead in the Hands of One in whom our confidence can never be misplaced. It was a fine

[1] Dean Stanley's *Westminster Abbey Sermons*, p. 253.

saying of an old heathen that the gods take care of us after death, and that 'we are one of their possessions.' We are one of God's possessions; He takes care of us after death. It is because we believe in a future, ruled and governed by the very same God that rules and governs the past and present, that we can trust.

> Thou, Abba, knowst how dear
> My little child's poor playthings are to her;
> What love and joy
> She has in every darling doll and precious toy.
> Yet when she stands between my knees
> To kiss 'goodnight,' she does not sob in sorrow,
> 'O, father, do not break or injure these.'
> She knows that I shall lay them fondly by
> For happiness to-morrow.
> So leaves them trustfully.
> And shall not I?

Very beautifully did the early Christians express their belief in the safety of their Departed. It was their custom constantly, some think, to bury with them Chalices containing the Consecrated Wine, called *Paterae*. They may have borrowed the custom from the Pagans who buried their dead with *Paterae*, containing the blood of a sacrificed Victim. If so, the custom is doubly beautiful. Christianise the idea, and you get the old Pagan victim transfigured into the life-giving Blood of the Lamb—'Himself the Victim'—the best of all passports to

the other world.[1] We may remember, too, that the Greek Church emphasises the safety even of the body as part of God's earth, when the Priest, casting earth into the grave, says 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.'

There is, indeed, one moment in life when such trust seems almost impossible. It is when we stand at the grave of one who has, we seem forced to believe, resisted grace, flung God's gifts in His face, and refused forgiveness up to the very end; who seems to have had every chance, and to have deliberately thrown every chance away. Our very love for such an one makes our trust the harder. How can we honestly say of him 'in sure and certain hope'? We may comfort ourselves with the thought that the words 'in sure and certain hope,' which, in such a case, seem to some an unreal mockery, have within them just the very corrective, just the very teaching that we want. There need be nothing unreal about them. Hope must involve uncertainty, or it ceases to be hope: it becomes knowledge. 'Sure and certain' involves a question of degree. However sure, however certain, our abstract hope may be, it cannot, and does not, amount to knowledge. Though hope is not certainty, a hope that is neither 'sure nor certain'

[1] Cf. *The Likeness of Christ*, by Thomas Heaphy.

practically ceases to be hope, and becomes doubt. And in the ministry of Burial, the priest, acting not on his own belief or disbelief but as the official mouthpiece of the Church, does not eliminate hope from any single case presented by the Church for Christian burial. The Church bids him use the words for all who are *officially* within her pale, lest he judge on 'blind half knowledge' and err on the side of severity. We ourselves may indeed hope for such an one up to the end—and there feel we must stop. Beyond the end we cannot pierce. The Church hopes beyond the end, and there is our comfort. We ourselves may see no hope for the departed, but the Church may perchance bid us see in him 'Christ the hope of glory'—a hope to become fruition after many days' purgation. God's larger love may see what our narrow love is blind to. A quaint sonnet suggests the strange instinct of even animal love to see what love alone can hope for. It tells its own story.

None mourn this hideous, sodden heap of clay.
Loveless it lived, defiled by every lust,
Deformed by every passion. Dust to dust!
Ashes to ashes! Idle 'twere to pray
O'er such a carcase. Only hide away
Its noisome horror from the daylight. Thrust
It forth uncared for, and unwept to rust
In secret. Let its memory pass away.

> Man, who art thou that judgest? See the mute
> And pitying dog that licks the dead man's hand.
> We ask not what it was that formed the band
> Betwixt them, but we may not well dispute
> Some cause for love there. One will understand
> And love this something better than his brute.

There is, of course, another side to the question, a side we dare not push aside in these or any other days. It is suggested by the word Suicide, and the long train of sorrows which it involves. We think next, then, of The Sin of Suicide.

CHAPTER XII

THE SIN OF SUICIDE

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Suicide is a crime. *Napoleon the Great.*

Suicide is contrary to Reason, to Instinct, and to Common Sense. A positive certainty of extinction, or an absolute proof of annihilation, is the only sane defence for the sin of suicide. We might, indeed, almost deduce a belief in immortality from the comparative fewness of suicides. While admitting to the full that they are gravely on the increase,[1] and making the most of the fact, there is

[1] It is estimated that over 3,400 persons commit suicide in England and Wales in the year, a number which is equivalent to almost ten out of every 100,000 of the population. Here is the substance of last year's Leading Causes for Suicide according to the Salvation Army's Prevention Bureau—

Financial embarrassment, or hopeless poverty,	50 per cent.
Accidents, sickness, or other misfortunes,	21 ,,
Drink, drugs, and disease,	11 ,,
Melancholia from loneliness, or other cause,	9 ,,
Forgery and other crimes,	5 ,,

A notable fact here is that the hard struggle for existence is a more prolific source than even drink.

still no reason why in thousands of cases suicide should not rather be the rule than the exception if death really puts an end to everything. Why should a man go on battling with life in its weird and ghastly aspects, if he can, at will, hurry himself into extinction? To do so, is contrary to all common sense. But the fact remains, that he generally does; that he battles on; that he dreads dying more than living; that his reason, his instinct, his common sense tell him that, in all human probability, suicide will only make things worse for him instead of better.

We may look at the question from two standpoints, the Christian and the non-Christian.

The Christian rejects suicide on two grounds—the value of life, and the duty of obedience.

First, the value of life. S. Paul preaches with heart and soul the value of life, not its worthlessness. To a Christian, the value of life has been entirely changed by the Incarnation and the Redemption. Ever since the Incarnation, when, for an allotted period of years, no more and no less, God lived on earth 'in the flesh'; ever since He, who had the power to lay down His life at any moment, kept it for a definite span, and that in spite of every conceivable temptation to hasten its end; ever since the great

Thirty-three years, Christians have estimated their own span of earthly life at a new and priceless worth. Ever since the Redemption, life has by the Christian been appraised at a value before undreamed of. And it is just in these facts that we find suicide impossible.

It is interesting to notice the value set upon human life at different stages of civilisation, to compare the treatment of the sick and aged among many ancient tribes and in our own day. Professor E. B. Tylor, in his work on *Anthropology*, tells how the ancient Brazilians clubbed their sick and aged, when they found their care too burdensome; how travellers have witnessed many such a heart-rending scene as Catlin saw in the desert when he said farewell to the white-haired old Puncah chief, all but blind, and shrunk to skin and bone, crouched and shivering by a few burning sticks, having had left for his food a dish of water, and a few half-picked bones, and for shelter a buffalo hide set up on crutches. The old warrior, abandoned at his own wish, was left to die when his tribe started for new hunting grounds, even as years before he had left his own father to die. Professor Tylor tells us how, in Sweden, there used to be kept in churches certain clumsy wooden clubs, called 'family

clubs' with which, in ancient times the aged and sick were put to death by their kinsfolk.[1]

So with child life. Among the Romans, child life was held of even less account than it is now by the brute, who, to satisfy his own lusts, brings the child into the world, insures it life, and dooms it to death. Even the Emperor Augustus, in whose reign Christ was born, ordered his own grandchild to be exposed to death at its birth. 'You suffer your children to die' writes Tertullian to the Roman magistrate 'of cold and hunger, and to be eaten of dogs.' There would have been little at the time to excite much attention when Herod ordered the infants of a small village like Bethlehem to be put to death. Life was 'not much accounted of in those days.' Nor, indeed, at times since then. Even since the Incarnation, both in Church and State, there have been times of grotesque underrating the value of human life. As to the Church: Lord Acton, the great Roman Catholic historian, writes in a letter to the *Times*, dated 8th November 1874, that 'a Pope, famous as the author of the first crusade, decided that it is no murder to kill excommunicated persons. This rule was incorporated in the canon law. In the revision of the code which took place in the sixteenth century,

[1] *Anthropology*, chap. xvi.

the passage was allowed to stand. It appears in every reprint of the *Corpus Juris*. It has been for 700 years, and continues to be, part of the ecclesiastical law. Far from being a dead letter, it obtained in the days of the Inquisition, and one of the later Popes has declared that the murder of a Protestant is so good a deed that it more than atones for the murder of a Catholic. Not so very long ago, in France, Rousseau taught that any one accepting the religion of the State, and acting as if he did not believe its dogmas, should be put to death—*il a commis le plus grand des crimes*.' The Press would kill such a doctrine now in twenty-four hours. So with the State. In Green's *Short History of the English People* we are told as an example that in the eighteenth century cutting down a cherry tree was punished with death.[1] One of our most distinguished lawyers, Sir Samuel Romilly, spent no inconsiderable portion of his life in efforts to mitigate the severity of the criminal law, and in doing away with the punishment of death for the most trivial offences. There must be many alive now who can remember when it was a capital offence to steal a sheep. Even as late as 1870 it was legal to punish a man with death for stealing money of more value than a shilling.

[1] *Short History of the English People*, ch. x.

The higher the value placed on life, the lower will be the statistics of suicide. We who believe that God thought it worth while to live this life on earth for a definite number of years, until He was able to say 'It is finished'; we who are 'imitators' of S. Paul and see him living on year after year in heart-breaking surroundings, until he could honestly say 'I have finished my course'; we who watch S. John out-living his contemporaries, apparently surviving his own work, and yet 'tarrying' until he is 'come for' —we know it would be against all Christian principles to throw away our lives from a cowardly refusal to 'endure unto the end.' It is better to live than to die, unless the cause for death be adequate. Doctors, priests, nurses, and indeed practically all of us are called at times to die, to 'throw away our lives' for others, and to say with Judas Maccabeus, 'if our time has come, let us die manfully for our brethren's sake.'[1] Thus it is recorded in the second book of the Maccabees that 'Eleazar, one of the principal Scribes' welcomed death with renown rather than life with pollution, and 'advanced of his own accord to the instrument of torture,' and 'having formed a high resolve, and one that became his years and the dignity of old age,

[1] 1 Maccabees, ix. 10.

and the grey hairs which he had reached with honour, and his excellent education from a child . . . declared his mind accordingly, bidding them quickly send him to Hades.'[1] We may be called upon to die for principle, or for others; but no man is ever called upon to die for himself. Self-murder for self's sake can never be justified. 'No man,' argues Socrates, 'ought to kill himself before the Deity lays him under the necessity of doing so.' And so argues the Christian. Self-murder is the act of a coward. Napoleon the Great, when a prisoner at St. Helena, wrote: 'Suicide is a crime—most revolting to my feelings. No cause presents itself to my understanding by which it can be justified. It certainly originates in that species of fear which we call cowardice. For what claim to courage can that man have who trembles at the powers of fortune? True heroism consists in rising superior to the trials of life in whatever form they may challenge him to combat.' There are even times when to run away is braver than to 'make an end of it,' when it is still right, if persecuted in one city, to flee into another.[2] There may even be cases when Demosthenes's apology—'a man that runs away may fight again'—for escaping from a

[1] 2 Maccabees, vi. 19, 23, R.V.
[2] S. Matthew, x. 23.

lost field applies to us. It would probably have been easier for S. Paul to have died fighting than to let himself be rescued by the Roman Guard; but it would have been a cowardly act when the lives of so many others depended upon his living to fight another day.

Again, to the Christian, there is the duty of obedience. Obedience to a Divine command is to us, ideally, final. We Christians require nothing more. We have been told 'Thou shalt do no murder,' and to us *cadit quæstio*. Murder is of two kinds—homicide and suicide, and one is just as much forbidden as the other. The sixth commandment is on the same level as the eighth, and we have no more right to steal our lives than we have to steal the Crown jewels—and for the same reason: neither the one nor the other belongs to us. The mere fact that the sixth commandment was one of the five which our Lord Himself recapitulated lends fresh force to the old law against murder of all kinds, self-murder included. To the Christian, the mere thought of suicide is thus excluded, cruel and bitter as life may seem, sad and dismal as the outlook may be. Self-murder is as hideous to us as the murder of another, and for the same reason. It is written, 'thou shalt do no murder.'

But such arguments will not, perhaps, appeal

to non-Christians. Other lines of thought will be more helpful for them.

Think of the law of Chances—a law certainly worth considering in connection with the wilful suicide of the sane. It is a law which is daily appealed to by thousands in secular matters. Thus, Cecil Rhodes 'decided that it was at least an even chance—a fifty per cent. chance—that there might be a God.'[1] It is so with a future. Even the most confirmed agnostic (using the word in its popular sense) will admit that there is at least a chance of a future life. If he is a business man, he will admit that it is 'bad business' to risk a deal on doubtful security. And yet with strange inconsistency he will, when committing suicide, risk the whole of a possible future, of which he fully admits there is a chance—a fifty per cent. chance perhaps—as he certainly would not risk a £5 note in a business transaction. It is not a question of certainty, but of security. What possible security can he have that Revelation, probability, and the teaching of the 'Holy Catholic Church throughout the world' are all wrong, and he alone is right? It is contrary to a sane business training.

[1] *The Last Will and Testament of C. J. Rhodes.* W. T. Stead, p. 89.

Indeed, the very suggestion hints at a mental twist. Such egotism would lead us to say he must be mad. Such a conclusion does suggest itself, practically, to the modern Coroner's jury in nearly every case of suicide. By almost universal consent, juries in suicide cases in these days give a verdict of 'unsound mind,' or 'temporarily insane,' wholly irrespective of evidence, and thus apparently proclaim their opinion that no sane man could, or at all events would, commit suicide. It is, in the estimate of a British jury, contrary to common sense and business instincts.

Now, certainly, we may believe that the vast majority of Suicides are not, at the moment, responsible for their action, however responsible they may be for that which has led to the deed. We may certainly believe that the brain is, at the moment, unhinged, and that self-control no longer dominates the will. Of such suicides, we may say with perfect trust and confidence, 'with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption.' Even the law of the land holds that 'the contract of a lunatic is voidable at his option if it can be shown that, at the making of the contract, he was absolutely incapable of understanding what he was doing, and that the other party knew of his

condition.'[1] Surely the law of love will not be less merciful. God, Who knows all, will deal very tenderly with such Suicides. For such we can at all events heartily echo Robert Browning's hope for Clive—'Clive's worst deed . . . we 'll hope condoned.' We may safely and happily leave the issue in His Hands.

But it is wholly impossible to say honestly that all Suicides are insane. No amount of generous feeling or kindly sentiment can blind us to the fact that some are perfectly sane. In such cases, to minimise the effect of the sin is to multiply the number of the sinners. Our own Church, indeed, by definitely forbidding Christian burial to those who have knowingly and deliberately placed themselves outside the Christian faith, does not shirk the weird fact that some are responsible for the last and worst act in their lives. She officially declares that if those who seek her offices wilfully ignore the conditions of Church membership, they themselves make it impossible for her to treat them as Church members. She has not left them: they have left her. And, as they have left her, she has no alternative but to refuse them Church burial. Who otherwise could respect her? There stands the 1661 Rubric—'the cruel rubric,' as it is often called—

[1] Anson's *Law of Contracts*, 1879, p. 114.

Here is to be noted, that the office ensuing is not to be used for any that die unbaptized[1] (*i.e.* not already Church members) *or excommunicate* (*i.e.* expelled for misbehaviour) *or have laid violent hands upon themselves*' (*i.e.* have excommunicated themselves). It is patent to all; it is in no hole or corner; and it is there for a set purpose. It is Church law. As such, it applies to Church members. The law says that if any one, being sane, wilfully, deliberately, and with full knowledge of what he is doing, 'lays violent hands upon himself,' he places himself, *ipso facto*, outside the Christian Church. If so, he cannot, obviously, receive Christian burial at the hands of the Christian Church. He has deliberately left the Society to which he belonged. To refuse Christian burial to a Suicide is the only honourable, indeed the only possible, action the Christian Church can take in response to the deliberate leaving of her pale. It is not that she is narrow, or vindictive, or unloving, or that she pronounces any final verdict upon the dead. It is, that the Church must be as true to Church law

[1] Archbishop Longley wrote in 1865: 'The Service of the Church of England for the Burial of the Dead is intended for those who have been made members of the Church of Christ by Baptism, and to use that service over the unbaptized would be an anomalous and irregular proceeding on the part of a minister of the Church of England.'—Cf. Blunt's *Annotated Prayer Book*, p. 293.

as the State must be true to State law, if either Church or State is to exist. It is no more cruel for the Church to say to the Suicide: 'You must take the consequences of your deliberate action,' than it is cruel for the State to say to the criminal: 'You must take the consequences of your crime.' No Society could exist under any other conditions. It would forfeit, and rightly forfeit, the respect of its members if it made a law, and was too indifferent or too weak to carry that law out. The Church is, of course, speaking in the abstract, and not of this or that individual case, which must be judged upon its own merits. It is with the Church as with the club. Every club has the right to make, and does make, certain conditions of membership. Speaking generally, if a member wilfully puts himself outside those conditions he is expelled from the club, and has no right to the club's privileges. No club could exist on any other terms. This or that individual may and must be dealt with on the merits of the individual case. The rule in the abstract stands, and must stand. It is not cruelty; it is common sense. How, in the abstract, can the Church officially and in set words positively proclaim her 'sure and certain hope,' in the plain common sense meaning of the words, over sane Suicides? How can she honestly admit them to a

Service which is the outward and visible sign of that membership which they have wilfully rejected? How could any society admit men to its privileges, after they had voluntarily ceased to be its members? To leave a club, and to claim a right to its benefits, is contrary to common sense. The Church in refusing Christian burial to non-Christians is simply in the same position as any other society.

It is interesting to note that our Rubric is the echo of an old Church Council, when the Eucharist formed a part of every burial office. 'Concerning those who, *by any fault*, inflict death on themselves, let there be no commemoration of them in the oblation. Let it be enjoined that those who kill themselves by sword, poison, precipice, or, by any other means, bring violent death upon themselves, shall not have a memorial made of them in the oblation, nor shall their bodies be carried with Psalms to burial.'[1] Beyond this, neither the official voice of the Church, nor the private judgment of any human being, has either the right or the wish to go. 'To his own Master,' most certainly not to us, the Suicide 'standeth or falleth,' and that Master knows all—knows his upbringing and his downfalling; knows his ancestry and his environment; knows what is unknown to us, and perhaps

[1] Council of Braga, A.D. 563.

even to the man himself. 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' There is but one thing we know for certain—that always and everywhere 'God is love,' and that love is as much part of justice as justice is of love. Can we get beyond this at present, and would we if we could?

CHAPTER XIII

THE SHORTNESS OF LIFE

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Time has clipped its wings to fly the faster. *Lacordaire.*

Following upon the value of life, we are naturally led to dwell on its strange brevity.

The shortness of life! One is inclined to say that no other argument is needed for the belief in a future. Our intelligence negatives the theory that this short life is all. 'Man that is born of woman hath but a short time to live.' We echo the cry of Rhodes on his death-bed: 'so much to do, and so little done,' and when we realise that it came from the lips of one who probably did more than any other man in the years allotted to him, we hear in it the note of a hopeless despair if this life were all. It would, indeed, be the cry of the desperate if all were over when the clock struck, and if the hour of our death were the hour of our destruction.

Or we echo the cry of Livingstone: 'I should be

miserable if I thought there was a single land I should never visit, or a single language I should never know.' As we recall how much he saw, and knew, we hear in it the God-given longing which could never be satisfied if this life were the end of the traveller's journey. 'So much to do, and so little done.' It is the cry of history. Who knows what Mozart would have done had he lived a few more years? Who knows what Bach, Händel, and Beethoven would have written had they lived longer? Haydn tells us that ideas were floating in his mind far beyond anything he had ever done, but his strength was no longer equal to the task. All that the greatest have ever done is but an indication of what we think they could have done if they had lived longer. The very brevity of longevity is an indication of a futurity. Our greatest attainments are ephemeral. Like the Ephemera, the insect which loses its glory in the very hour of its shortlived perfection, death parts us from them in the moment of their birth. From each and all comes the cry 'life is not long enough': 'the time is short.'

It is just this feeling which our Burial Office puts into words: 'Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live; he cometh up and is cut down like a flower, he never continueth in one

stay': rather, he progresses from one stay to another. 'In My Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so'—'if the natural conclusion from the shortness of our stay in any one sphere of life were false'—'I would have told you.'[1] But it is just in the fact that man is 'cut down like a flower,' and like a flower has an uprising in the spring, that we find a message of hope. Or, again, if man lived for ever here, if there were 'no more death' in this world, then, under known conditions, 'the world itself could not contain' the souls that should be born into it throughout Eternity. Borrow the flower-thought from the Burial Office. If the flowers were not cut down, if in flower life there were 'no more death,' what would be the result? Think of a poppy plant. 'There are,' we are told, 'many thousands of seeds on one single poppy stem. Supposing only ten of these seeds succeeded in growing each year, in the next year that poppy will have produced ten new poppy plants; the year after, each of those ten will have produced ten more, making a total of one hundred; and in the third year there will be one thousand, in the fourth ten thousand, and so on in the same proportion, till in a few years the whole world would simply be full of poppies.' So with man.

[1] S. John xiv. 2.

If there were 'no more death' in this limited, finite sphere of being; if fallen man were not 'cut down like a flower'; if his time on this planet were not short but eternal; if there were a tree of earthly life of which he could eat and live for ever in the garden of earth, the known world could not contain the number of beings which would exist. We should be like a tangled mass of flowers in an overcrowded flower pot, and the world would be one huge slum of crushed, despairing, stunted souls. Thank God we are 'cut down.' But we are not cut down as some boy might cut down a flower with a stick, without a purpose or meaning. Every death has in it a Divine purpose. God never picks a flower to throw away. The Hand that picks us wants us—wants us to make room for others; wants us in the garden to which he transplants us. 'Man that is born of woman hath but a short time to live,' and is (who does not see it here, there, and everywhere?), in his fallen state, full of misery. But here is our Catholic hope. The misery might well be unendurable, if it were permanent. But it is passing. It will not last long. That which is temporal is tolerable. If this earthly life were eternal, we might well doubt God's love. How could we face the problems of life if it were not that we know they were 'temporal.' For instance,

if pain were permanent, this world would be little better than a mediæval hell. But the temporal is full of happiness, just because it is temporal. Man is buoyant, because he hath but a short time to live under temporal conditions. It is God's promise that 'for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.' Thus there is an ethical value in the temporal. The 'things that are seen' are transient: 'the things that are unseen,' the things that are underneath them, the fruition which springs from them, their unseen developments and results, these are eternal. Actions done in time do not end with time. The thought makes work possible. The very shortness of the temporal is an incentive to energy, if we believe in the eternal. Nothing perishes. The works we have begun, and which have so often come to an end, the time and trouble we have spent on the transitory—they have an unseen future before them. If God spends all the wealth of the Divine energy on the little flower which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the baker's oven, just to help make fire for the baking of bread, the temporal is indeed full of hope for the eternal.

If, then, man has but a short time to live, reason, instinct, revelation, all combine to convince us that this life is but a chip of that great block of

life of which it is an integral part. It is incredible that God should have given us so much to do, and so little time to do it in. If we are doing our utmost, it ought to make us very patient with ourselves to remember that God has given us an eternity in which to do what He does not expect us to accomplish in threescore years and ten. It is incredible that He should have limited our aspirations by the barrier of 'threescore years and ten,' or even ten score years and three; that He should expect us to get into a few brief sentences the whole volume of life. It is incredible that He should have confined most of us to the narrow local circumstances of the average career, and yet have given us a largeness of outlook He never means to satisfy. That is not the God of the *Psalms*, who 'satisfieth the hungry soul with good things.' That is not the God of the *Magnificat* who 'filleth the hungry with good things.' How can God be God and listen to 'the cry of a soul caught in the snare of an immense desire which it is forbidden to enjoy?'[1] The mere fact that 'man hath but a short time to live' here suggests a further life beyond.

The mind recalls the graves of those we call great—household names in history or historic names in households. How many there are whose very

[1] Cf. *Christ or Ecclesiastes*, p. 123, Scott Holland.

graves are unknown to us, from that of the world-known S. Paul to that of the anonymous pauper. Does the grave really end all? Is the sexton's entry of the death, we will say, of Marie Antoinette of Lorraine and Austria, Queen of France and Navarre, buried without monument or inscription, really the end of all? Is it indeed the final scene of her life? The entry runs,[1] as it is written to the President of the Revolutionary Tribunal, thus:

The 25th Vendémiaire, year II.
Widow Capet.
Coffin . . . 6 livres.
Grave and grave diggers 25 livres.

And that is the epitaph of the gayest, saddest life of her time, or perhaps of any other time. Just a few short years of boundless adoration, mad pleasure, inconceivable misery, cruel torture, and then 'Coffin . . . 6 livres'—and that is all. It cannot be all. Or think once more of, perhaps, the most pathetic figure of childlife in all history, that of her son, Louis XVII. Were the hideous cruelties, incredible tortures, the disputes about his captivity, the unknown grave, really the end of the boy's short existence? Not if God is God; not if God is love. The very shortness of his poor, but

[1] Cf. *Marie Antoinette*, translated by E. M. Cope, chap. lv.

too long, life surely necessitates a hereafter, unless justice is an empty figure of speech, and love the synonym for cruelty.

This short life, then, we feel sure, is not all; and we feel sure of it just because it is so short. It is only, as Canon Scott Holland puts it, 'a fragment, a piece of some larger whole . . . It pronounces itself at every turn to be but a beginning, but a suggestion. That melancholy refrain . . . which must tell out its sadness, like a passing bell, to all those who limit their vision to this earth, as the long centuries carry further the bitter antitheses, the art which is so lengthy, and the life that is so short—that melancholy refrain is turned for us into the roar and rush of happy marriage bells —for us who see in all this busy earth nothing but the beginning of a promise that has immortal issues—nothing but the decking of the Bride that she may be ready for the Bridal—ready for all the immeasurable honour of the Kingdom which hath no end.'[1]

However and whenever this life ends, it ends within a very short time of its beginning, a time wholly incommensurate with the objects of attainment which even this world places before us. It cannot be all.

[1] *Christ or Ecclesiastes*, p. 117.

There are many kinds of death. One dies of one thing, and one of another. Beethoven dies of dropsy, Chopin of consumption, Brahms of cancer: some die suddenly, like Wagner, and Verdi, and Gounod, and Lippi; others, like Louis XV., live on to a weary old age. Some die working away up to the very end, as Bach died dictating the choral prelude *Before Thy Throne I come*, or as Mozart died dreaming of his unfinished *Requiem*: others die long after the tool-box has been closed and the tools have been put away. Some die as little children, like the Holy Innocents, and innocents of every age; others as the aged, like the Disciple whom Jesus loved. Put it as we will, one predominant thought confronts us—this short life cannot be all; one supreme longing possesses us, as it possessed the great statesman on his death-bed: 'I am human, but I should like to live after death.' It is a human longing, but it is of Divine origin, and He who created the longing will satisfy the desire.

CHAPTER XIV

IMMORTALITY AND COMMON SENSE

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Quid mihi prodest, si mortui non resurgunt? *S. Paul.*

We may use our common sense as an appeal to two classes of minds, the commercial and the legal.

I.

The Commercial Mind. It might be argued that common sense should not be called as evidence in a case admitted by both sides to be beyond and above sense altogether. Such, however, was not the opinion of a keen thinker like S. Paul. In his letter to the Corinthians he seems positively to revel in the common sense argument. Nor was it the attitude taken by those to whom he wrote. Practical, hard-headed business men of commercial Corinth, they carefully preserved the letter which we now count as one of the greatest treasures of the Church.

We will get to the pith of his argument at once. 'If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth me if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die'; or, as the Revised Version translates and punctuates the passage: 'What doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die.'[1]

The words are as familiar to us as an old tune. We at once associate them with the tenderest, and perhaps the best moments of our lives, as they recall to us this or that church and churchyard in town or village, where we heard them read in the Burial Service of the Church of England. Then just when we needed them most; just when perhaps we were staggered at the sight of the coffin and all that it meant; just when we were feeling glad and grateful that some hard life was ended and the fight in some cruel arena of circumstances was finished, or were bitter and resentful at what George Herbert calls 'uncouth, hideous death'; just when head and heart were weary with asking each other *cui bono?* to whom is life any good, if it is all to end like this?—then, almost like a wedding peal of hope, deadening the great gonglike sound of the tolling bell, came the

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 32.

practical, unsentimental, common-sense argument —but it cannot all end like this. The very argument from loss and gain, advantage and disadvantage, forbids the thought. Man's common sense rejects the sad and gruesome theology which teaches that Ephesus with its wild beasts is the end of all things. Man's common sense resents the *reductio ad absurdum* of a mere animal life which begins and ends in eating, drinking and dying. It is foolish, it is silly, it is wholly unworthy of business men and women, who are using their hands and heads in Corinth, in London, anywhere. The common sense of the average man demands some purpose in and beyond death. If common sense is worth appealing to, it must have a better answer to give than this.

So at least thought those keen, hard-headed business men in the offices, warehouses, shops, and dockyards at Corinth. And it is to them that S. Paul, a business man himself, addresses his argument. 'We,' they seem to say, 'are no theologians; we are no scholars; we have not had your opportunity of sitting at the feet of the great Professor Gamaliel; we have no time in our crowded, strenuous, business lives to go into all these theological questions: we are simply men of the world, engaged all the week in using our

common sense in the affairs of daily life—give us something our common sense can lay hold of, and act upon: we know how invariably right doing hangs upon right believing, and we want to "believe and to do" what is right.' And swift and straight the answer comes. Use your common sense, writes the Apostle. I appeal to your business instincts, to the law of loss and gain, advantage and disadvantage. Let me put it in business language. 'What advantageth it?' 'What advantageth' all your business transactions if they are to lead to absolutely nothing? 'What advantageth' all your investments if they come to an end with themselves? 'What advantageth' your long days, and weeks, and months of self-imposed toil, so early rising, so late taking rest, if it is all to end in nothing? 'What advantageth' it that you fight against those 'wild beasts' of greed, and lust, and gambling, and drinking, and cheating, and lying, in the arena of your own personal Ephesus, if it is all to end in annihilation, or in the transmigration of your soul to begin all over again a weary series of indeterminate reincarnations in another body? *Cui bono?* Is it common sense?

And then, because a concrete case carries more weight than any argument, the Apostle gives his own personal experience as an illustration. Take

my case, he seems to say. 'If after the manner of men,' if with merely human, earth-bound hopes, if with no hope of immortality, 'I have fought with beasts,' be they literal or moral, 'at Ephesus,' 'what advantageth it me if the dead rise not?' It is not business; it is not sense.

Who knew it better that S. Paul? He calls up all his past. Once again he sees himself in the great arena of business life, in the wrestling yard of argument, in the thick of religious controversy, fighting his way inch by inch, with death daily fronting him. Once again, he recalls the three days' reign of terror which he spent in the dark at Damascus, sees himself brought to his knees, touched with the sword of the Spirit, and rising a Knight of the Crucified; once again he feels the longing of the mob, craving like 'wild beasts' to tear him in pieces, making ready to spring at him, trembling to get him within the paralysing clutch of their claws; once again he feels himself swinging, and swaying, as he dangles mid-air in the basket in which he is let down from a window at Damascus. If any man, he, more than any man, can draw an argument out of the well of his own experience. 'If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus'; if I have fought for my Master, fought for my religion,

fought for the right, what in the name of common sense is the good of it 'if the dead rise not'? Then, indeed, the Ephesian Amphitheatre might just as well be exchanged for some gay house of a voluptuous Caesar; then, indeed, it might be sound argument to hold that we were sent into the world to have a good time, irrespective of 'truth, meekness, and righteousness,' indifferent to virtue, irresponsible for a future life which is non-existent; then, indeed, let us make our own the epitaph of Sardanapalus, 'let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' Fairly and squarely, he puts the case to them and leaves them to draw their own conclusions—but leaves them with the rousing trumpet-call of his own common-sense conclusion: 'Awake to righteousness and sin not.' Righteousness and unrighteousness, right and wrong, do matter; there is a future, and that future depends upon the present.

II.

The Legal Mind. Next, the legal mind. We may apply our common sense to examine the report that our Lord's Sacred Body was stolen, and not raised after death.

Our Resurrection depends upon the Resurrection of Christ. 'In Christian eyes the central part of

the world's annals is the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. The Resurrection of Christ is the guarantee of our own.'[1] We hold that if Christ was not raised from the dead, then our Christian faith, and all that it involves, is vain; then there is no atonement, no pardon through the Precious Blood, no forgiveness possible; we 'are yet in our sins.' It is on the Resurrection and its results, therefore, that the enemy's attacks have naturally been concentrated. Books abound[2] which deal with the deeper aspects of the subject, and meet the arguments adduced against it. The argument from common sense may perhaps claim a link in the dealing with evidence.

Let us take as an illustration of our enemies' methods the well-known story of the Soldiers at the Grave.[3] It was asserted that, on Easter Eve, His Disciples came by night, stole the Body of Jesus, and then invented the fiction that on the third day He rose again from the dead. We would echo the words of S. Matthew, and add that this saying is 'commonly reported unto this day.' Examine the report as you would

[1] Cf. Liddon: *Some Elements of Religion*, Lect. iii. § iii.

[2] E.g. *Our Lord's Resurrection*, by W. J. Sparrow Simpson; *The Resurrection of Our Lord*, by Professor Milligan.

[3] S. Matt. xxviii. 11 *sq.*

examine any other report. Summon it to appear before the court of common sense; deal with it as you would, or should, deal with any rumour; sift the evidence as you would sift the evidence of any modern witness in a modern Law Court.

First, the Report. The case, as reported by S. Matthew, was this. It was said that, on Good Friday evening, a guard or watch of Roman soldiers (some sixty in number) surrounded the tomb where the Body of Jesus lay, that a stone was rolled to the door and a Government seal affixed (that is, a rope was stretched across it, either end being sealed), that all the soldiers fell sound asleep, that bodysnatchers then stole the Body without waking any of the soldiers, and that all Pilate's police with all the means at their disposal, and all the Chief Priests with all their religious power over the people failed to find any trace of it whatever. Is this common sense?

Next, the Evidence. Let us put the officer of the guard into the witness-box, and examine him.

'You remember last Friday evening?'

'I do.'

'You were ordered to watch the tomb in Joseph's garden?'

'I was.'

'And you placed your men in the best position for that purpose?'

'I did.'

'What sort of a tomb was it?'

'The ordinary kind of tomb, hewn out of rock, with a stone rolled across the opening.'

'What was the size of the stone?'

'The common size—about three feet high and six feet broad.'

'Did you take any further safeguard?'

'Yes. The ends of the usual rope across the stone were sealed with the Government seal.'

'Now, tell us: What would be the punishment if you went asleep at your post?'

'Death.'

'And the same for the soldiers?'

'Yes.'

'And this was perfectly well-known to all your men?'

'Perfectly.'

'And your statement is that, knowing this, you and all your men, one and all went to sleep on duty?'

'It is.'

'What, all sixty of them?'

'Yes.'

'And you all slept so soundly that thieves stepped across your sixty bodies, silently rolled away the stone, and removed the body over your sleeping forms?'

'Yes.'

'Without waking any one of you?'

'Yes.'

'Sound sleepers?'

'Yes.'

'And you say it was the *disciples* who stole the body?'

'It was.'

'How could you tell if you were asleep at the time?'

No answer.

'Well! the court of common sense will draw its own conclusions.'

Then, the Exposure. In sifting evidence, two forces invariably have to be taken into consideration—motives and money. As to motive. The very existence of Judaism, and all that it meant to the Chief Priests, hung upon disproving the evidence of the Resurrection. A suspicion would at once suggest itself, when it came out that the 'Chief Priests went to the soldiers and offered them money.' More suspicions still would arise when it transpired that money, 'large money,'

had passed between them. It turned out after all that it was a money transaction. 'And the soldiers took the money and,' as a matter of course, 'did as they were taught.'

Is it not a common experience? The moment you take money for wrong-doing, you place yourself in the power of the money-giver. You must do as you are told. There is a seaweed on the coast of Cornwall called 'the dead man's coil,' because, once entangled in its meshes, the best of swimmers is lost. The soldiers could not help themselves. In the power of the Chief Priests, they were in 'the dead man's coil.' The taking of hush-money alone rendered their evidence practically worthless, flimsy as it was upon other grounds. 'They took the money and did as they were taught.' It is the history of many an otherwise inexplicable action. It is an illustration of a type of evidence against the Resurrection which vanishes upon examination. But it did its harm. Fifteen to twenty years later the historian writes that the report, absurd as it was, lingered 'to this day.' We might say the same now. Foolish and untrue as the soldiers' evidence was, complete as was the exposure, yet the harm done by the lie was lasting. It has been repeated quite lately in a working-man's paper which has an enormous

circulation. If, when writing on such apparently foreign subjects, such papers would use their common sense, and appeal fairly to the common sense of their readers, they would do good service in exposing, rather than in restating, theories unworthy of their notice. Surely to the legal as well as to the commercial mind, common sense, within its own jurisdiction, appeals in its own way as a link in the chain of evidence in favour of the doctrine of Immortality.

CHAPTER XV

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Tu devicto mortis aculeo: aperuisti credentibus regna cælorum. *Te Deum.*

'*Dieu, mon Dieu, ouvrez-moi, ouvrez-moi!*' 'Lord, open Thy way to me.' So, at the end of a life full of mountains and valleys, cried the great French preacher of the nineteenth century. And in that cry Père Lacordaire has, perhaps, given us the best explanation we can have of death. *Mors janua vitae.* Death is the gate of life. It is thus both an exit and an entrance. It is an exit, that is an 'exodus,' 'a way out' of Egypt; it is an entrance, that is a 'going across into' the Promised Land. Death, then, is a passage out of one state, and a crossing into another. It is no stone wall, no *cul de sac*, or blind alley, leading nowhere. It is, in Prayer Book language, 'a gate'[1]—some chancel gate, as it were, opening the way into the very sanctuary of God's

[1] Cf. Collect for Easter Eve.

Presence, with the great Christ, under whom we must pass, on the Rood above. Death was the Gateway through which Christ entered into His glory. By dying He opened the gate for us, that where He is there we might be. Never, perhaps, was Lacordaire more eloquent than in these last failing words, uttered just before he passed through the Gate himself; never more lucid than in his forecast of death as 'a way' to Heaven. Thank God, man can die! To live for ever here would be to live for ever under the very curse from which death delivers fallen man. The effect of such a curse is told in legend in an old seventeenth-century book, describing how a Jew named Ahasuerus, 'the wandering Jew,' as we familiarly call him, refused to succour the dying Christ on the way to crucifixion, and how he was therefore doomed never to die himself, a fate more terrible than any death, save the death of those who will to be lost.

'For consider what would be the result if death were abolished and men endowed with an earthly immortality. At first they might rejoice and think their last dreaded enemy destroyed. But what a mistake! In the first place, since none are to be removed from the earth, of course none must come into it. The space and material

are all wanted by those in possession. All are soon mature men and women—not another infant ever to hang upon its mother's breast, or be lifted in a father's arms. All the prattling music, fond cares, yearning love, and gushing joys and hopes associated with the rearing of children gone! What a stupendous fragment is stricken from the fabric of those enriching satisfactions which give life its truest value and its purest charm! Ages roll on. They see the same everlasting faces, confront the same returning phenomena, engage in the same worn-out exercises, or lounge idly in the unchangeable conditions which bear no stimulant which they have not exhausted. Thousands of years pass. They have drunk every attainable spring of knowledge dry. Not a prize stirs a pulse. No terror startles them. No possible experiment remains untried; nor is there any unsounded fortune left. No dim marvels and boundless hopes beckon them into the future. *They have no future.* One everlasting *now* is their all. At last, the incessant repetition of identical phenomena, the unmitigated sameness of things, the eternal monotony of affairs, becoming unutterably burdensome and horrible, what would they not give for a change! Anything to break the nightmare spell of *ennui*—to fling off the dateless flesh—

to die—to pass into some unguessed realm—to lie down and sleep for ever: it would be an infinite boon. Take away from man all that is dependent on, or interlinked with, the appointment of death, and it would make such fundamental alterations of his constitution and relations that he would no longer be man. It would leave us almost a wholly different race. If it is a Divine boon that men should be, then death is good to us; for it enables us to be men. Without it there would be neither husband and wife, nor parent and child. The existent phenomena of nature and the soul would comprise all. And when the jaded individual, having mastered and exhausted this finite sum, looked in vain for anything new or further, the world would be a hateful dungeon to him, and life an awful doom, and how gladly would he give all to migrate to some untried region and state of being. Without death mankind would undergo the fate of Sisyphus —no future, and in the present the oppression of an intolerable task with an aching vacuum of motive. The certainty and the mystery of death create the stimulus and the romance of life. Give the human race an earthly immortality, and you exclude them from everything greater and diviner than the earth affords. Who could consent to that? Take away death, and a brazen wall girds in our narrow life,

against which, if we remained men, we should dash and chafe in the climax of our miserable longing, as the caged lion or eagle beats against his bars.'

Man must die to live. His very name is a name of death. His earliest conception of himself was 'one who dies,' one who is 'mortal.' One of the earliest names for man was *Marta*, the dying; in Greek, *Brotos*, mortal. To the gods alone, man gave the opposite title *ambrotoi*, immortal, without decay.[1] 'We have got into the base habit,' says Ruskin, 'of opposing the word mortal, or deathful, merely to *im*-mortal; whereas it is essentially contrary to *Divine*.'[2] Man claims the right to die as man because he is mortal; and death alone opens to him the gate of immortality. But what is death? Nobody knows. 'In the Hebrew conception, Death was a majestic angel, named Sammaël, standing in the Court of Heaven, and flying thence over the earth, armed with a sword, to obey the behests of God. The Talmudists developed and dressed up the thought with many details half-sublime, half-fantastic. From the soles of his feet to his shoulders he is full of eyes. Every person in the moment of

[1] Lectures on the *Science of Language*. Prof. Max Müller, vol. i. p. 437.

[2] Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, vol. v. p. 183.

dying sees him, and at the sight the soul retreats. From his naked sword fall three drops—one pales the countenance, one destroys the vitality, one causes the body to decay. Some Rabbins say he bears a cup from which the dying one drinks, or that he lets fall from the point of his sword a single acid drop upon the sufferer's tongue: this is what is called "tasting the bitterness of death." Here, we see, it is not strictly death that is personified. The embodiment is not of the mortal act, but of the decree determining that act. The Jewish Angel of Death is not a picture of death in itself, but of God's decree coming to the individual who is to die.'[1] So again: 'The Greeks sometimes depict Death and Sleep as twin boys, one black and one white, borne slumbering in the arms of their mother, Night.' It is a bold and happy stroke of artistic genius, but in no way expresses or suggests the scientific facts of actual death. There is also a classic representation of Death as a winged boy with an inverted torch, and a butterfly at his feet. This beautiful image conveys to the beholder not the verity of death, but the sentiments of the survivors in view of their bereavement. The sad brow denotes grief of the mourner, the winged insect and disembodied psyche, the reversed torch,

[1] Professor Max Müller, *The Science of Language*, vol. ii. p. 352.

the descent of the soul to the under-world: but the reality of death itself is nowhere hinted at. The Romans give descriptions of Death as a female figure in dark robes, with black wings, with ravenous teeth, hovering everywhere, darting here and there eager for prey. Such a view is a personification of the mysteriousness, suddenness, inevitableness, and fearfulness of death rather than of death itself. Death has been shown in the guise of a fowler spreading his net, setting his snares for men. But this image concerns itself with the accidents of the subject, the unexpectedness of the fatal blow, the treacherous springing of the trap—leaving the root of the matter untouched. The circumstances of the mortal hour are infinitely varied, the heart of experience is unchangeably the same.

Again, we ask, What is death? and again the answer comes, Nobody knows. It is one of 'the secret things which belong unto the Lord our God.' To have theories about death; to forecast results from death; to witness the effects of death; such things really bring us no nearer to understanding death itself. No definition of death tells us what death really is. And science cannot help us. 'We send a shot through a bird, and it falls dead, that is, lies still, and after a while, decays again into the dust of the earth and the gases of the air. But

what has happened to it? How does it die? How does it decay? What is this life that has gone out of it?' No man knows. Revelation is silent, and science can tell us no more about the end than about the origin of life. It is humiliating to confess it, but, vast as is the change in the region of discovery since the days when Vesalius, the founder of anatomy, was condemned by the Pope for dissecting a dead body, no amount of dissection, no fresh discovery, has brought us one iota nearer to the answer to our question. We can no more catch the point where death touches us than the ear can catch the point where one key enters another. It is God's secret, and, at present, we cannot get beyond the old words of the Psalmist, 'when thou takest away their breath they die.'[1] No artist has ever really painted death, though Landseer has approached nearer to the mystery in the head of his 'Hunted Stag' than most painters. It is left for death itself to reveal what death is.

We can, however, consider what is known about death, even if we cannot explain death itself. We may think of it in three ways.

I.

Death and Sin.—Sin has spoilt death. Death,

[1] Ps. civ. 29.

designed, it may be, as the painless passage to a higher sphere of being, has suffered sad wreckage at the hands of sin. Sin has introduced a new and terrible factor into our consideration of death, and has, alas! wholly altered the relationship between mortality and immortality. What, then, we ask has been, and what is the relationship between sin and death?[1]

Both the Old and the New Testament describe death as the result of sin. The old warning, 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,'[2] is echoed by S. Paul in the seen result of the eating. 'Death hath passed upon all men for that all have sinned.'[3] But what is here meant by death? Not necessarily physical death. Physical death was not indeed the product of sin. Science reveals that there were myriads of deaths before the first recorded death of man.[4] 'Science demonstrates that sin was not actually the origin of natural decay, and proves that death was a monarch on earth for ages before moral transgression was known. As the geologist studies the record of nature, where earthquake, deluge, and volcano have exposed the struc-

[1] Cf. S. Ambrose, *On Belief in the Resurrection*, Bk. ii., section 37, *sq.*

[2] Gen. ii. 17. [3] Rom. v. 12.

[4] Cf. *Prehistoric Time.* Lubbock.

ture of the globe and its organic remains in strata piled on strata, upon these, as upon so many pages of earth's autobiography, he reads the history of a hundred races of animals which lived and died, leaving their bones, layer upon layer, in regular succession, centuries before the existence of man.' Man's sin did not initiate physical death. Whatever the story of Adam and Eve is meant to teach, and whatever period is meant by 'the day' in Genesis, the record makes both our first parents live on for many a long day after they had earned the wages of sin, after they had eaten of the fruit of which it had been said, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' Again: When it is said that 'Christ abolished death,' it cannot be physical death to which the Apostle refers, for Christ did not abolish natural death. Men still die. It was moral death, spiritual death, that sin produced and Christ abolished—that death to which S. Paul alludes when he says, 'We have passed from death to life because we love the brethren.' In the mind of S. Paul, physical death seems to have been part of the Creator's primal plan for man. It was 'an inauguration of another form of life.' Death was, it would seem, the ordained means whereby man was to be translated to a Garden even better than the Garden of Eden.

Man was not created perfect in the sense that no progress was possible. Eden was the first stage—a perfect first stage—in that journey of everlasting progress designed by the Creator for the created. It was the starting-place of a journey which, without sin, was to be accomplished unimpeded by sin's limiting barriers, undarkened by sin's gloomy tunnels, unhindered by sin's rough roads. Without the pain, or punishment, or penalty which sin introduced, man could have been taken into the Divine Being, through union with the Incarnate, for whom the necessity of 'becoming sin' for man would not have existed. It was a design of incomparable splendour. Sin spoilt the splendour of the design. Sin introduced the misery of moral death into physical death. Sin demanded a suffering Saviour to abolish spiritual death, and changed the mode and character of physical death from a joyous means of ascension into a painful and penal passage. Thus, 'sin introduced no essential change in the physical organisation of man,' but rather in the character of death by which his earthly existence terminates. 'Had it not been for sin, death would only have been the form of a higher development of life.' But sin intervened, and man's ascent—before Christ's visit to the Spirits in Prison—became rather a descent, a descent into what

Scripture describes as 'the lower parts of the earth,' or what S. Cyril of Jerusalem calls 'the under-world.'

It was into this under-world that sin sent the sinless Christ Who, by a freewill act of love, changed once again the relationship between death and sin, between mortality and immortality. 'Christ,' writes S. Cyril of Jerusalem, in his fourth Catechetical Lecture, 'descended into the under-world to deliver those who from Adam downwards had been imprisoned there.' 'Christ,' writes S. Ambrose, 'solved the chains of the under-world and translated the souls of the pious.' By His 'precious death and burial, by His glorious resurrection and ascension,' Christ abolished death, destroyed death, stung death to death. Christ, being sinless, by His death slew death—spiritual death, moral death. Thus the character of physical death is changed once more. It is not yet abolished; it is transfigured. It is still punitive, still penal in its character, but Christ's sinless Death and Resurrection have drawn its sting, have overcome its 'sharpness,' have made it once again a ladder of ascent, have abolished the mist and misery which surrounded it before the first Good Friday and Easter Day. *Christus spoliat infernum.* Christ, as the old hymn puts it, 'has spoilt the spoiler of

his prey.' 'Before Christ's coming,' writes S. Jerome, 'Abraham is in the lower regions; after Christ's coming, the robber is in Paradise.' 'The flaming sword that keeps the way of Paradise, and the Cherubim that are stationed at its doors are alike quenched and unloosed by the blood of Christ.'[1] Death, physical death, was once a pale-faced, ugly thing. But, as George Herbert would say:

> But since our Saviour's death did put some blood
> Into thy face:
> Thou art grown fair and full of grace,
> Much in request, much sought for, as a good.
>
> For we do now behold thee gay and glad,
> As at doomsday;
> When souls shall wear their new array,
> And all thy bones with beauty shall be clad.

Through Christ, God has 'loosed the pains of death'—or 'the chains of the under-world,' as the words have been translated—and has established yet a new relationship, rather than re-established the old, between death and sin, between mortality and immortality. Such is the terrible effect of sin on death; such the glorious result of the Redemption. Well may the Apostle exclaim, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'

[1] Letter lx. to *Heliodorus*. Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, p. 124.

II.

The Shock of Death.—Is it not, sometimes, too readily assumed that death will make no difference to character, that we shall be exactly the same the moment after death as we were the moment before? The reaction from the old teaching that death would act as a magic charm, and would, *per saltum*, fit the souls of the saved for the Celestial City is natural; but may not the present teaching somewhat underrate the possible effect of the shock of dying upon human character? True, there is nothing whatever in the act of dying to alter a man's 'state of salvation.' But shocks may, and as a matter of fact sometimes do, change a man's character, and change it 'sudden, in a moment.' The very suddenness of the flash may have in it a means of grace.[1] The shock of a catastrophe may, and often does, work a permanent effect. We know how shocks change character—how, for instance, before the Revolution Louis xvi. had been beloved for his gentleness, but how the innumerable insults he received, and the treatment to which his queen was exposed, embittered him to such a degree that he became morose and stern and bitter.

There is no catastrophe like the catastrophe of

[1] Cf. *Atonement and Personality*, Dr. Moberly, p. 114.

death ; no shock like the shock of dying. If a soul dies in grace, may not the very act of dying be used by God to effect that which no other cause could produce ?

Then, too, we must remember that the shock of death predicates pain, and pain purifies. The 'dividing asunder' of body and soul, and all that is meant by the wrench of death, cannot be without suffering, of whatever nature that suffering may be. Such pain, however momentary or prolonged, must take its place in the list of means whereby God perfects the soul. No death can, it would seem, be wholly painless—though many deaths are probably without physical pain. The pain of death is the last chance the soul has on earth of being made 'perfect through suffering.' God's mercy is over all His works, and we may be sure that none die without the grace of suffering, however ignorant we may be as to what that suffering is. Pain is the punitive aspect of 'death.' Christ's death turned the punishment into a privilege, and our union with Him secures us the privilege of pain. There are 'sundry kinds of death,' but, however long or speedy death is in coming, the shock of the last wrench must be there. The effect of the shock may differ on character as much as the manner of death itself. One dies in one way, one

in another; but all experience the shock. Henry IV. dies quietly on a pallet in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster, and Richard III. on the field of Market-Bosworth amid all the carnage of civil war; Edward III. dies forsaken by all his servants, and his son, Edward the Black Prince, is buried in Canterbury Cathedral followed by a mourning nation. The shock of death is felt by them all, however different its effects may be on each.

We need not underrate the power of the shock of death because it has been overrated. While protesting against the old unscriptural teaching that death 'puts everything to rights,' we need not deprive ourselves of the legitimate hope that the shock of death may have, both in ourselves and others, the purifying effect of suffering without which we cannot be made perfect. If a sudden shock, or a series of shocks, may cause a sudden conversion, may we not hope that the last and greatest shock of all, the shock of death, will have a lasting influence on character?

III.

The Fear of Death.—Tertullian uses the fear of death as an argument in favour of Immortality. 'Why dost thou fear death at all, if thou hast nothing to fear after death, inasmuch as thou hast

(if not immortal), nothing to feel after death? . . . Thou wouldst not fear it unless thou knewest that there is something after death.'[1] But, apart from argument, the question is often asked: Is a fear of death the sign of sin, or of sanctity? Is a freedom from fear the sign of trust, or of presumption? Obviously, the answer must depend upon the conditions of the case; obviously, fear or want of fear may be either a sign of overconfidence or a lack of faith. Speaking in the abstract, however, we may best answer the question in the words of that great master of the spiritual life, Bishop Jeremy Taylor. He says: 'It is not a sin to be afraid; but it is a great felicity to be without fear.'

There is a sense in which a lack of fear is mere animalism. It is the 'mere animal defiance of death. We know that man can by custom and constant hardening be at last rendered callous to the fear of death; but the result sometimes is, so far from a good one in man, a terrible and wild outburst of evil nature in him. So long as he was under the fear of death there was something to restrain him; there was something hanging over him; there was something before him which he dreaded; he was under the yoke and he felt it;

[1] Tertullian, Library of the Fathers. *Treatises*, vol. i. pp. 137-8.

but when this last check is flung off, then he triumphs wildly in his freedom and tramples upon law. This is the effect of conquering the dread of death in the base and carnal heart; it lets the whole man loose; and, according to the rule of *corruptio optimi pessima*, just as the victory over the terror of death in self-devotion produces the highest state of mind, so the mere animal conquest of it produces the lowest.'[1] Thus, it is not a sin to be afraid, because it is sin which makes us afraid; it is a great felicity to be without fear because 'perfect love casts out fear.' Here we seem face to face with two great words in their relation towards the fear of death—Sin, and Assurance.

Sin suggests a certain fear of death,[2] natural even to the most saintly. It is related that when a great saint, S. Arsenius, was on his deathbed, he was very trembling and fearsome. Asked the reason by those who knew his sanctity, he confessed to a fear of death, and said that 'it was no other than he had always borne about with him, and what he then thought right he had no reason now to think wrong.' Personal sanctity is no talisman against the fear of death. The unit must share in the sin of the aggregate; and, apart from personal and

[1] Mozley, *University Sermons*, p. 169.
[2] Cf. Ps. lv. 4, 5.

individual sins, our share in corporate sin, the 'sin of the whole world,' may affect us with fear and amazement.

Fear need not be, though it may be, a sign of personal, unabsolved guilt. It may be the felt result of universal sin. On the other hand, fear of death may, of course, have its roots in some personal, unabsolved sin, some sin committed years before. Time brings about many things, but one thing it never can bring about—'the absolution or remission of sins.' To hear men talk, or to see them act, one would think that 'Time' should be pictured with 'the Keys' rather than 'the Scythe.' Unforgiven sin may well cause a fear of death, though a fear of death is not necessarily a sign of unforgiven sin. In any case, Confession and Absolution may dispel such a fear.

Again, physical causes are frequently the source of a fear of death. There is an animal fear, such as the fear of the horse that will not leave the burning stable, which frequently asserts itself in moments of nervous depression, and much unnecessary pain might be saved if a physician, either of the body or the soul, were consulted.

Another cause for fear is a certain shrinking from the ugly—a starting back from what George Herbert calls 'uncouth, hideous death.' The

decay of natural beauty and the ludicrous uselessness of artificial aid, so vividly described by Charles Dickens in his weird picture of Mrs. Skewton's illness in *Dombey and Son*, tell of natural fear. It is the fear felt by S. Francis Borgia when he saw the 'corruptible' in the body of the Empress Isabella, so lately full of majesty and beauty—a sight which drew from him the cry, 'Never again will I serve one subject to death.' A shadow of this fear is sometimes seen, over and above other reasons, when folk fear growing old.

Or again, 'the unknown' has in it the element of fear, as well as the joy of anticipation. It has its part to play in preparing the soul for its passing. The first of anything not infrequently has in it something of fear—the first speech, the first voyage, the first operation, the first match, the first school. It may well be that the first flight into the great Unknown will not be free from fear, just because it is 'the unknown.'

But there is the other word for us to consider—Assurance. It is the word which balances fear and makes it, paradoxical as it sounds, not inconsistent with trust. The doctrine of Assurance has been so handled as to make many enemies, and it needs replacing in its rightful position—that is, a relative position, a position relative to

fear. To those who teach that, at the moment of conversion, the soul is given an assurance which it can never lose, we can, of course, only reply, facts are against you. Up to the very hour of death, there is the fear of falling away. The 'Crown of Life' is for those who are 'faithful unto death.'[1] Up to the very last moment, man must pray the prayer in Newman's *Dream of Gerontius* :—

> From the perils of dying ;
> From any complying
> With sin, or denying
> His God, or relying
> On self at the last,
> From all that is evil,
> From the power of the devil,
> Thy servant deliver,
> For once and for ever.

But Assurance, though a terrible danger to the presumptuous, is just what some souls need—and never more so than 'in the hour of death.' Assurance is the essential outcome of a belief in 'all the articles of the Christian faith'—the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Atonement, all that we mean when we say 'through Jesus Christ our Lord.' It is what S. Francis would call an 'interior certitude,' and is, of course, a word of degrees—and a word not unwholly untinged by

[1] Cf. Prof. Ramsay's *Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia.*

temperament. Some have it in a greater degree, some in a lesser. Bishop Forbes says that 'to certain saints an assurance of their salvation may have been made the subject of a special revelation, but this,' he adds, 'is not the ordinary working system of grace.'[1] Our own experience will confirm this. It is a great gift of God, and if we would have it in the hour of our death, we must exercise ourselves in it all our lives.

What, then, are we to say about this gift of Assurance? We quote again from Bishop Jeremy Taylor: We may say first, that 'all the interval between losing our Baptismal grace and our death, we walk in a cloud, having lost the certain knowledge of our present condition.' That first. But secondly: we have not wholly lost our Baptismal grace. Hence, 'there are degrees of assurance in a great variety of men, and every step of returning to God may reasonably add one degree of hope, till at last it comes to the certainty and top of hope. Though it is true that many may believe themselves to be in a state of grace when they are not, many are in a state of grace and are infinitely fearful they are out of it, and many that are in God's favour do think they are so and are not deceived.'[2]

[1] *Commentary on the Litany*, p. 160. [2] *Holy Dying*, Sect. viii.

We may then believe that, 'as persons grow in grace so they may grow in confidence of their present position'; but 'to be certainly persuaded of their present condition is not a duty; sometimes it is not possible, and sometimes it is better to be otherwise.' 'In any case,' adds the Bishop, 'the certainty is reasonable in none but very old Christians, habitually holy persons, not in new converts or lately lapsed people; for concerning them we find the Spirit of God speaking with clauses of restraint and ambiguity, with a "perhaps," and "who knoweth," and "peradventure the thoughts of the heart may be forgiven." If Adam and Eve fell in Paradise and the Angels fell in Heaven itself, stumbling at the very celestial jewels which pave the streets of celestial Jerusalem; if 'in the Christian family one man for whom His Lord had prepared a throne turned devil, we shall be chary in assuming an undue Assurance.' If we look at our own lives, 'it will,' the Bishop says, 'discompose the gaieties of our present confidence.'[1]

The feeling of Assurance is, then, a matter of degree; and of degree differing in different persons in different stages of their spiritual growth. Some have very little, and should ask for more. God blesses one degree of grace with another.

[1] Cf. *Holy Dying*, sect. viii.

To sum up. Bishop Jeremy Taylor[1] concludes that, roughly speaking, Scripture tells of three degrees of Assurance. S. Paul, when writing his first Epistle to the Corinthians, was very fearful of being reprobate, and felt much exterior mortification to be necessary. But, when he wrote to the Romans some time later, he is far more confident, being 'persuaded that neither height nor depth nor any other creature could separate' him 'from the love of God.' And when, at the end of his life, he wrote to S. Timothy he was still more confident, and declared that 'a crown of righteousness was laid up for him.' 'If we reckon our securities, we are not likely to be reproved by any words of Scripture; but when the confidence outruns our growth in grace, it is itself a sin. The sum of it is this:—All that are in the state of beginners and imperfection have a conditional certainty, changeable and fallible in respect of us (for we meddle not with what is in God's secret purpose). They that are grown towards perfection have more reason to be confident and many times are so. But to those few to whom God hath given confirmation in grace, He hath also given a certainty of condition; and therefore, if that be revealed to them, their persuasions are certain. If it be not

[1] Cf. *Holy Dying*, sect. viii.

revealed to them, their condition is in itself certain, but their persuasion is not so.'

Whether or no this commends itself to the average man, it seems to strike a balance between presumption and over-confidence which will help us in preparing for a *bona mors*. For after all, it is 'a good death,' not a comfortable death, which one desires to die, leaving the amount of sensible consolation, or purifying pain, to Him. There is a sense in which each must take the scroll which Perugino, in his portrait of himself in the Florence Gallery, has placed in his own hand, bearing the inscription *Timete Deum*. It is in the reception of the Viaticum, the appointed 'provision for the way,' that the union of fear and assurance is duly sustained. Such provision has, therefore, been ordered by the Church from the very first of the General Councils.' [1]

There is a fine passage in the *Dream of Gerontius* on the point. The soul, just dead, addresses its Guardian Angel:—

SOUL

Dear Angel, say,
Why have I now no fear at meeting Him?

[1] 'Let none be deprived of the last and most necessary Viaticum when he departs out of this life.' Council of Nicea, Canon XIII., and reaffirmed at Lambeth Conference, 1867.

Along my earthly life, the thought of death
And judgment was to me most terrible.
I had aye before me, and I saw
The Judge severe e'en in the Crucifix.
Now that the hour is come, my fear is fled,
And at this balance of my destiny,
Now close upon me, I can forward look
With a serenest joy.

ANGEL.

It is because
Then thou didst fear, that now thou dost not fear,
Thou hast forestalled the agony, and so
For thee, the bitterness of death is past.

There is, then, a fear of death which is right and wholesome, and there is a fear which is cowardly and wanting in assurance. Death is, as Schiller puts it, the 'most high and mighty Czar of all flesh'; but there is one mightier even than death, One who is indeed to be feared, but One who is to be trusted by those who possess the love which casts out fear. The union of both illumined Lacordaire's last hours. 'Mass was said in his room daily, and he liked every day to have some part of Bossuet's *Préparation à la Mort*, or the *Acte d'Abandon à Dieu* read to him; but the thought of death was long familiar to him. In his extreme weakness he said, pointing to the Crucifix, "I cannot pray, but I can look at Him." Every day he had some part of the Bible read to him, selected

especially from the Acts of the Apostles, the Gospel of S. John, and some of S. Paul's Epistles.'[1]

It was an old custom for men in the making of wills to express their humble assurance as a legacy for their survivors. Thus Morton, Bishop of Durham (*ob.* 1659) says: 'I do here solemnly profess, in the presence of Almighty God, that by His grace I have always lived and purposed to die in the true Catholic Faith wherein I am baptized, firmly believing all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and fully assenting to every article of all three creeds (commonly called the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene and Constantinopolitan Creed, and the Athanasian Creed) which, in the ancient Church, were accounted the adequate rules of faith, and have been received as such by the Church of England.' And again, to quote a very different class of mind—yet not wholly unlike—Charles Dickens. His will, dated May 12, 1869, runs: 'I direct that my name be inscribed in plain English letters on my tomb . . . I commit my soul to the mercy of God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and I exhort my dear children humbly to try and guide themselves by the teaching of the New Testament.'

[1] Sidney Lear's *Life of Lacordaire*, p. 329.

CHAPTER XVI

IMMORTALITY AND THE JUDGMENT

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Inde venturus est judicare vivos et mortuos.
Apostles' Creed.

What is this Last Judgment which artists have painted and Scriptures have pictured? Do the painters expound the Scriptures? Do the paintings interpret the pictures? Do the pictures correspond with the paintings? Upon the answer will depend, to some extent at least, our belief in the seventh article of the Apostles' Creed. Painting after painting in gallery after gallery tells of the fascination of the theme. Artist after artist reflects the teaching of his time. 'From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.' Names such as Giotto, Fra Angelico, Michael Angelo, Signorelli, Rubens, Raphael, recall the greatness and variety of the treatment of the doctrine, though strangely enough there is little or nothing earlier than the eleventh century. And

the pity of it is that the artist as he reflects the teacher, and the teacher as he reflects the artist, so often misleads, so frequently indulges in the grotesque.

We cannot feel that, as a whole, painters have been true to the Scripture, or that there is Scriptural warrant for their paintings. We are glad that we are not seriously bound to accept their teaching, and give a sigh of relief when we remember that they only represent the tenets, and often only the artistic expression, of their time.

To paint the 'Last Judgment' on canvas without being materialistic may indeed be impossible. We stand before the *Last Judgment* of Fra Angelico in the Accademia, or we study the *Last Judgment* of Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel, and though we bend the knee in homage to artistic beauty, and even to the arresting weirdness of the scene, it is certainly a relief to look away from such magnificent horrors, and, in spite of all their attractions, to turn to the mental picture of the General Judgment as it is drawn in Revelation. We turn with a conscious sense of rest to the picture of the 'Last Judgment' by S. John, last of the apostles, in the last book in the Bible.

Here it is—and it is, of course, purely pictorial and wholly symbolical. 'I saw the dead small and

great stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.'[1]

Here, in the story of the books, is the inspired picture of the Judgment. The imagery is obviously borrowed from an ordinary law court. As such, it appeals as much to the English as to the Eastern mind. The question is, what is the picture meant to portray? what is the symbolism meant to suggest? what is this Judgment? what are these Books?

We think of an ordinary criminal court, with the accused standing at the bar. The central figure is that of the judge. Before him are, symbolically speaking, two books—the law books of the land, and the indictment containing the 'accusation written' against the accused. It is by the loyal and legal handling of 'the books' that justice is secured and judgment pronounced.

Here is no arbitrary judgment pronounced by an autocratic judge. The judge's duty, however great his abilities, however eminent his position, is not to acquit or condemn, to punish or to pardon, the accused of his own mere will, irrespective of evidence, circumstances, advocacy, but to judge him 'according

[1] Rev. xx. 12.

to his works.' He is there to administer justice according to law—the law of the land under which the accused is living. It is by bringing together the two 'books' —the law of the land and the 'accusation written'—and comparing one with the other that a right judgment is formed. Thus, judgment involves comparison. In other words, judgment consists in comparing the conduct of the criminal with the law of the land. The sentence will depend upon the result of the comparison. The accused will be judged 'out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works.'

So it is in S. John's great picture. There is the symbolic court. There are the accused 'great and small,' standing at the bar of judgment, all equal in the eyes of equity. There, as artists have always and rightly pictured, is the Central Figure, 'the Judge of the whole Earth.' There are 'the Books.' The judgment is at hand. 'The books' (the law-books of the Kingdom of Heaven) are opened. 'And another book was opened, which is the book of life,' or the book of *the* life (*i.e.* the daily life).[1] 'And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works.'

[1] Cf. S. Aug. *De Civ. Dei*, xx., c. 14, 'The book of the life of each man.' But for another interpretation see *The Apocalypse of S. John*, H. B. Swete, Rev. xx. 12.

Comparison is made between the two books—the book of conduct and the book of grace.[1]

Here, again, is no autocratic judgment. God does not judge us arbitrarily, wholly irrespective of our circumstances, characters, capacities. He is no Oriental despot, as some have cruelly taught, no inhuman tyrant as Calvin proclaimed, ordaining some to heaven and some to hell.[2] He never judges irrespective of our chances, character, and power of acquirement; never sets before us an unattainable standard; never forgets our limitations—as Beethoven in his Mass in D is said to have forgotten the compass of the human voice. The judgment is awful and terrible, but we are never meant to 'ascribe to God the monstrous injustice of confounding in one indiscriminating sentence the self-condemned sinner, and the helpless victim of ignorance or the bewildered but conscientious seeker after truth.' He judges us by the exact standard He knows that we can correspond to—for grace is ever given to attain unto it—and with this standard He will compare our lives.

What, we ask, is this standard? And we

[1] According to this interpretation, the third book ('The Lamb's book of life') would contain the names of those judged worthy of everlasting bliss. Rev. xxi. 37.

[2] Cf. Calvin's *Institutes*, lib. iii. 22.

answer, it is a standard which differs in differing periods of the world's history—though the fixed standard of abstract righteousness is maintained all through. Thus, the Judge will compare 'the life of the heathen with the law of Conscience, of the Jew with the law of Moses, of the Christian with the law of Jesus.'

The heathen will be judged 'according to their works' compared with the book of Conscience.[1] Conscience has told them right from wrong, even if 'the eyes of their understanding' have not been enlightened by Christianity. They have had 'Conscience,' as Dr. Martineau puts it, 'acting as human before it is felt to be Divine.' Bishop Chauncey Maples—writing of the East African—assures us that he has a Conscience long before his conversion. He says: 'conscience tells him that theft, murder, adultery, all these things are felt to be wrong, and there are none who commit these crimes, who do not at the same time admit them to be wrong, and who consequently admit the justice of their punishment.' For such, the comparison will be between the Book of Conduct and the Book of Conscience. What further standard of comparison and means of

[1] Cf. Dr. Salmon's *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, pp. 668, 669.

attainment will be revealed to the heathen in another world, we are not told. We know that corresponding grace will be given to them to reach the standard whatever it is. We cannot but feel far more in touch with Gregory's longing than with Gregory's creed for the heathen, when we read that his heart 'yearned towards those old pagan heroes, or sages, who had been gathered to their fathers without hearing the name of Christ. He could not bear to think, with the belief that prevailed at that time, that they had been consigned to destruction. One especially there was whom he was constantly reminded of in his walks through Rome—the great Emperor Trajan, whose statue he always saw rising above him at the top of the tall column which stood in the market-place—called after him the Forum of Trajan. It is said that he was so impressed with the thought of the justice of this heathen Sovereign, that he earnestly prayed in S. Peter's Church that God would even now give him grace to know the name of Christ, and be converted.' And so will it be with those living in Old Testament and New Testament days. For the Jews, the books of the Old Testament will be the standard with which their conduct will be compared. For Christians[1] there are the books of the New

[1] Cf. Dr. Wace, *The Gospel and its Witness*, p. 185.

Testament, and with these their lives will be compared. They are open to us now, as the standard to which we must conform. God is so fair. He never takes us unawares. Judgment on our conduct will be pronounced—is being pronounced—in strict accordance with the result of the comparison 'according to our works.' We are, thus, really automatically pronouncing judgment on ourselves,[1] as our lives correspond with, or differ from, the standard placed before us in the New Testament. It is for this purpose that the 'Books were opened.'

It is the boast of our country that the Bible is 'an open book,' and so it is. It is, or may be, in every one's hands. It meets us everywhere—in texts, in quotations, on walls, in railway stations, in advertisements, in daily papers. It is so cheap that, unlike some rare Raphael or beauteous Botticelli, it may be had for a penny. It is an open Bible for all who choose to read it. Why? To give us fairly and freely the standard by which we shall be judged. It is thus forced upon us that we are daily writing lives which will be compared with the Christ-life revealed therein. What that life is, what we are to conform to, mentally, morally, spiritually, an 'open Bible' will tell us. If we are too lazy, too indifferent, too careless, to ascertain

[1] Cf. *Atonement and Personality*, Dr. Moberly, p. 15.

the facts, we have but ourselves to blame and cannot plead ignorance. The English law admits no appeal to ignorance of its clauses, acquits no criminal on the plea that he did not know the law. The Divine law is, it is true, more merciful, and allows the plea of 'I wot that through ignorance ye did it' for the murderers of Christ. But this was not wilful ignorance, this was not the ignorance from which the Litany prays that men may be delivered. Thus there is, we repeat, nothing arbitrary or autocratic about the Judgment, and it is strange that men should deem it otherwise. 'Why is it,' asks Dr. Inge, 'that while we admit that physical laws are irrevocable and invariable, we sometimes like to imagine that it is otherwise with the soul, and that we may in this field expect arbitrary and uncaused reversals or suspension of laws, of a kind which in the physical world would throw everything into confusion?'

There is one more figure in S. John's picture of the 'Last Judgment' which we may do well to study. It is that of the Advocate. 'We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.' We are still in the symbolic Law Court. At the General Judgment at the Last Day (as at the Continual Judgment now going on, and at the Particular Judgment for each

individual soul after death) 'we have an Advocate' —and that Advocate, as the Greek suggests, 'a Paraclete,' 'A Comforter.' 'The image is,' says Bishop Westcott 'a legal one,' and he comments on it with singular fulness in one short sentence: 'He has Himself fulfilled, and pleads for the fulfilment of that which is right according to the highest law: He is not an Advocate who wishes to set aside law, but to carry it out and apply it: in Him the idea of manhood has obtained its absolute satisfaction, and, in turn, He claims that the virtue of this satisfaction be extended to all *in fellowship with Himself*.'[1] We must underline the words 'in fellowship with Himself.' It is because we are his 'members,' and not apart from or outside Him; it is because He is one with us, and not in the sense of separation substituted for us, that He efficaciously pleads His merits for us.

For us all, 'small and great,' clever and stupid, learned and unlearned, important and unimportant, 'unknown yet well-known,' those with ten talents, those with five talents, and those with one—this Righteous Advocate will plead His righteousness and our union with that Righteousness, as the grounds of our acceptance. And if we will have it so, but not otherwise, just because we are His

[1] *The Epistles of S. John*, 1 S. John i. 2.

members, because we are 'in Christ,' 'accepted in the Beloved,' in abiding union with the Head, living branches of the Vine, He will secure for us the verdict of 'Guilty—but pardoned through the Precious Blood.'

Such is the imagery under which the General Judgment is described by the inspired Seer. It is, we repeat, the language of imagery pure and simple. But it does not stop short of the deepest reality of which imagery is capable when it tells us, however short of truth even Bible metaphor must fall, that we have 'an Advocate.'

Of such language about the Judgment may be said all that Dr. Sanday has lately said of the language of eschatology. 'Though it has been to a greater or less extent laid aside, it has never been repealed. This may well mean that there are realities corresponding to it which shall remain unexhausted. Such a verse as Hebrews ix. 27, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment" is ratified by our consciences. And although the imagery in which the Judgment is described *is* imagery, and is not to be taken too literally, yet we may be sure that it has a solid foundation in the eternal laws of God's Providence and of His dealings with the souls of men.'[1]

[1] *Report of Manchester Church Congress* (1908), p. 384.

CHAPTER XVII

IMMORTALITY AND HELL

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IMMORTALITY AND HELL

Quomodo nos effugiemus si tantam neglexerimus salutem ?
Heb. ii. 3.

Popular conceptions bristle with misconceptions. Few theological difficulties are greater than those raised by the popular conception of Hell. For the history of Hell is largely connected with the love of the horrible—and the love of the horrible has a curious attraction for fallen humanity. It is this element which doubles the sale of the popular novel, increases the circulation of the daily paper, and fills Madame Tussaud's 'Chamber of Horrors' with fascinated crowds. It may act as an incentive, or a deterrent—but there it is, one result of the Fall. Popular conceptions of Hell as the climax of the horrible, may thus, perhaps, be partially accounted for.

A material hell-fire, human beings degenerating into blaspheming fiends, men and women growing

eternally more and more devilish, an almighty devil ruling in hell as an Almighty God rules in Heaven — such unscriptural ideas, exaggerated by the terrible poetry of a Milton, or the cruel canvas of a Michael Angelo, have for centuries frightened or amused according to men's belief or temperament. As a matter of fact, the Christian mediæval or the Miltonic conception of Hell differs but little from that of the old Pagan view of Tartarus. In popular thought, Hell has been only another name for Tartarus—'that deep, sunless abyss of Classical mythology, which Homer locates as far below earth as earth is below Heaven.' Its tortures, indeed, far exceed the torments of Tartarus. What is the Tartarus of Ixion tied to an ever-rolling wheel, or of Tantalus eternally cheated by the water which never reaches his mouth, or of Sisyphus doomed to drag the massive rock to the hill top only to see it continually roll back again, compared to the Hell preached by a popular Puritanism of less than fifty years ago?

And the teaching as to the lost is scarcely more Christian. Sayings of great men, of various schools, in all ages of Church History, make us shudder with mingled wonder and regret. S. Augustine teaches that unbaptized infants, though they will be in the 'mildest damnation of all' (poor darlings!)

yet will be eternally damned. Thomas Aquinas almost inconceivably argues, that the bliss of the saved will be increased by seeing the damnation of the lost. S. Jerome, speaking of the soul's materiality, actually argues: 'If the dead be not raised with flesh and bones, how can the damned after judgment *gnash their teeth* in hell?' Luther preaches that 'it is the highest degree of faith to believe that God is just, who of His own will makes us damnable.' And their teaching appeals to their hearers, horrible as it is—perhaps because it is horrible. But does such teaching really differ much from that of pagan Islam, which taught that God is an autocratic tyrant 'Who took into His hands a mass of earth, divided the clod into two portions, and threw one half into Hell saying "these to Eternal fire, I care not," and projected the other half into Heaven saying "and these to Paradise, I care not."'[1] The agreement seems greater than the difference.

Christian Art, or rather Art in the hands of Christian painters, is responsible for no small share in this appeal to the horrible. One illustration will be enough. Study Andrea Orcagna's reproduction of Hell in the Campo Santo at Pisa. Hell is a

[1] Cf. Palgrave, *A Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia.*

seething cauldron with Satan, a gruesome giant, sitting in the centre emitting flames of fire from out his pores, and the lost are seen 'spitted like fowls, and roasted and basted by demons.' The whole picture, with all its wonders, is a grim parody of Scripture, only too likely to be taken literally by those to whom it would appeal—as literally as the language of Satan in *Paradise Lost* has been taken by many in our own time.[1] 'That such disgusting horrors as are embodied in the so-called *Inferno*, which represents the last of the four *novissima*, are not warranted by a single word of Scripture, may be safely declared without provoking any controversial criticism. Morally speaking, they are equally unjustifiable. We may be sure that in those normal instincts which inspire emotion, human nature was the same when these pictures were executed as it is now. Who was ever edified, or even frightened at the hideous hobgoblinary . . . set forth as the (Mediæval) Christian idea of hell? Far more probably, have such representations helped to swell the very ranks of perdition, by fostering the natural cruelty of the unregenerate eye, and by ministering to the relish, always felt by the lowest of mankind, for sights of brutality and horror. That such forms

[1] Cf. *Liberal and Mystical Writings of William Law.* W. Scott Palmer, pp. 56, 57.

of Art should have grown up among Orientals, proverbially indifferent to human life and suffering, is intelligible, however detestable, but how such abominable revelries of wickedness should have found favour in the more civilised West, and painters have been persuaded to degrade themselves by their perpetuation, is difficult to comprehend.'[1]

Well! such conceptions have, for us, mostly had their day—and in their day, who may rightly apportion the good and evil they have done? They may have helped some. They have certainly hindered others; and a practical disbelief in any kind of hell, with a total denial of any kind of eternal punishment, and a wholesale rejection of any kind of devil, has been one of their reactionary results. We are no longer frightened at a Miltonic hell; we cease to fear that in which we no longer believe. The pendulum has, indeed, swung with dangerous force to the other extreme, an extreme which has produced such a Press comment as this on Mr. Tree's *Faust*, lately produced at His Majesty's Theatre:—'We need some correction of our theological ideas when so readily a vast audience turns to amusement at the thought of the Devil. The pendulum has certainly swung a long way from Calvinism when the adversary is so contemned

[1] Lady Eastlake, vol. ii. p. 412.

that his existence is really denied. Mr. Tree was not guiltless of a mental drift into masquerading a personality in whom it is presumed no one believes. . . . We have relaxed our hold on the conception of the Middle Ages, and of the century which gave rise to the vast output of *Faust* literature. We have revolted also from the Calvinistic theories—but the one danger which besets Mr. Tree's Mephistopheles is lest he should not himself believe in his actuality.'

But, as an experience, does not a wholesale denial of devil, hell, punishment, somehow fail to satisfy solid thinkers, whether unbelievers or believers in Revelation? The New Testament does distinctly and definitely reveal the existence of all three, and to meet the revelation by a flat negative is, to say the least, unconvincing even to unbelievers. It is indeed the non-Christian, rather than the Christian, who demands what he asserts his disbelief in. For example: No punishment, he will say, can be too bad for the brute who has wrecked another's life; no hell too fierce for the fiend who has deliberately and irretrievably ruined some pure boy or girl; no devil too cruel for the demon who has poisoned the wells of a literature eagerly drunk by a sensuous public. It is the Scientist who proclaims the law of Eternal punishment for sins com-

mitted in time. Break, he will tell you, one of the least of nature's laws, and the result is irrevocable and eternal. Science knows no way of redemption. Nature pardons no mistake, knows no law of atonement: she is cruel, she is relentless. Natural law, unlike supernatural law,[1] has no place for repentance, has no restored blessings to offer. And it is the same with man's moral sense. Man, as man, is not satisfied with the injustice of seeing 'the ungodly in great prosperity,' or with tracing no connection whatever between sin and suffering. He cannot, and does not, believe that, good or bad, 'it will be all the same a hundred years hence.'

What, then, are we to believe? Must we either accept the mediæval conception of Hell, or reject all belief in any kind of Hell whatever? Is there no third position, Scriptural, Catholic, credible? Surely there is.

Think, for example, of Eternal punishment. For the sake of clarity rather than of dogmatism, we will assume three propositions. (1) Holy Scripture reveals the doctrine of Eternal Punishment. (2) Holy Scripture nowhere reveals what that punishment is. (3) Holy Scripture everywhere reveals

[1] 'It may be true that nature pardons no mistake. It is part of the teaching of Christ that God in Him pardons even sins.' Darwell Stone's *Christ and Human Life*, p. 86.

that Eternal Punishment, whatever it is, will be consistent with a God of Love.

First, then, it is revealed that for some souls, known to God but not known to man, there is such a thing as Eternal[1] Punishment. It is revealed that if a soul, after due chances given, deliberately, of set purpose, and with eyes wide open or wilfully shut, rejects opportunities of grace, and riots in mortal sin; if such a soul, with full knowledge of results, point blank refuses to repent, and finally rejects God's proffered pardon, then such a soul shall go where it has been going all its life, 'into everlasting condemnation.'[2] Both the love of justice and the justice of love demand it. But no one knows, and no one ever has known, who the soul is that freely and finally wills to be lost. We do know that the uninstructed heathen who have never refused what has never been proffered, are excluded from the list of the lost; we can well believe that some who seem to us outside grace, and others who seem to us inside grace, will be judged by a different standard from ours by One who knows all; we know that no soul can ever say of any other soul—that soul is lost. We accept the Revelation

[1] For the meaning of the word 'Eternal,' cf. Dr. Salmon, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 663.

[2] Cf. *Atonement and Personality*, Dr. Moberly, pp. 14, 15.

as a warning for all souls, while we reject its application to any particular soul.

So, too, we know nothing whatever about the relative numbers of the lost and the saved, and all speculation on the point is outside our sphere as students of the Unknown. We have literally nothing to base any conceivable theory of investigation upon.[1] It is indeed related that S. Bernard, standing in vision 'by the Judgment-seat of God on two successive days was horrified to find that, of eighty thousand souls, only three souls of adults were saved the first day,' but it is difficult to follow such a system of numeration unless we have more evidence than would seem available as to the nature of the vision. It is said that 'among the strange cabalistic fancies of the Rabbis, one was an attempt to fix the number of the saved by the numeral value of the letters of this or that text that prophesied of the kingdom of Heaven,' and many were the anxious questionings arising out of such imaginings. Many, too, were the deductions from such texts as 2 Esdras viii. 1, 3, 'the Most High hath made this world for many, but the world to come for few': 'there be many created but few shall be saved.' But no notice whatever is taken by our Lord when the question was put

[1] Cf. Dean Church, *Human Life and its Conditions*, pp. 41, 42.

direct to Him, 'Lord, are there few that are being saved?' He at once stops all inquiry as though it were an impertinence, and ignores it as completely as if it had not been made. He turns the subject to that which concerns the questioner: 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate,' if you yourself wish to be saved. The question was for the asker, as it is for us, outside the realm of legitimate inquiry.[1]

Secondly, although Holy Scripture definitely and distinctly teaches the doctrine of Eternal Punishment, it nowhere teaches (save by picture and image and figure) what that punishment is. Man has defined what God has not defined—and it is here that we have gone wrong. We are not bound to believe man's theories about God's revelation. We are not tied down to accept this or that definition of what Eternal Punishment is. By Eternal Punishment we mean what God means. We do not know what He means, but we mean what He means. We cannot get further than this. We are but students of the Unknown.

But as such, we have a right to our own theory, provided that we treat it as a theory and not as revelation, and do not impose it as *de fide* on others.

[1] Cf. Dean Church's Sermon 'Sin and Judgment' in *Human Life and Its Conditions.*

Thus, we can form a theory about Hell and its punishment from the Scripture metaphor, *Gehenna*. We can see that to the Jew it might mean three things, giving him three clear pictures of Hell.

1. Gehenna was a place outside the Holy City.

2. It was a place in which filthy and infectious clothing and offal were burnt by perpetual fire.

3. It was a place outside the Holy City, but not outside the Roman government.

Here are three pictures, and only pictures, which help us to form some conception of Hell—speaking, of course, in terrestrial language. Thus:

1. Hell is a state outside Heaven.

2. It is a state in which the morally infectious are kept from harming others.

3. Though it is outside Heaven, Hell is not outside the government of the just and loving God.

Is not this third point a key which unlocks big secrets? The lost (we use the word for want of a better) are outside the Home of the Redeemed, but not outside God's government. Do we really hold that Hell is outside God's government? There is nothing to suggest it in Scripture, no hint of it in the word itself.[1]

[1] 'The word *hell* originally only meant the "covered" place. Thus a wound *heals* when it becomes covered with skin. The

It is difficult to trace the history of the idea that Satan, and not God, is omnipotent in Hell. Do we really believe that there is a state in which God, who reigneth over all, has neither part nor lot —where another and a rival God, called the Devil, reigns independently and supreme, under no authority whatever? Probably we do. But is this true? True or false, is it not what we have practically believed? Have we not thought of Hell as a place ruled by Satan, as independently as Heaven is ruled by God? Have we not, in other words, believed in two Gods, one the God of Heaven, the other the God of Hell? Have we not more or less thought of the devil as the old Scandinavian thought of Nikr?[1] Have we not, perhaps unconsciously, endowed Satan with Divine attributes, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience, Infinity? Have we not forgotten that he is but a created intelligence:—potent, but not omnipotent; present, but not omnipresent; finite but not infinite? Satan is not God. But if he is not God, he cannot rule in Hell independently of God. He cannot rule apart from God's permissive will. God

heel is the part of the foot which is covered by the leg. A *helmet* covers the head. The *hull* is the covered part of a ship.'—Isaac Taylor's *Words and Places*, p. 221.

[1] Modernised into *Nick*.

uses Satan as the means whereby He (God) punishes the wilfully wicked, but He does not hand them over to Satan as an independent power to wreak his tyranny upon them irrespective of higher authority. God alone is supreme, always and everywhere. 'He reigneth over all'—Angels and Archangels, the fallen and the unfallen, the lost as well as the saved. God is as much the God of Lucifer as He is of Gabriel. If otherwise, then there is not 'one God, but two Gods': then we must attribute to Satan powers and attributes which Scripture reserves for God alone. But, if God be the one alone true God; if Hell (whether place, or state, or both: 'I know not, God knoweth') be as much under God's supreme government as Heaven; if Satan, the created, be eternally under the control of God, the Creator, then much of our confusion of thought rolls away, and the Hell of the Bible comes within the government of the Creator by whose permissive Will alone Satan rules as the 'prince of the powers of darkness.' Then our third proposition becomes illuminating:—viz. that

Eternal Punishment must be consistent with a God of love. For God cannot be divided into parts, or passions. God *is* love. He is not sometimes love, and sometimes justice; love to some,

justice to others. He is always wholly love and wholly justice; always love to all and justice to all; never one without the other; never anything but 'God.'

Is not, then, the Scriptural position this? 'Without any tampering with solemn threatenings of Divine judgment, without any the faintest deviation or deflection from the Divine veracity, there is room'—to quote Bishop Bickersteth, late Bishop of Exeter, writing of the lost—'for the display towards these crushed and humbled ones, ruined and lost as they are, of that everlasting mercy which is the emerald rainbow around the Throne of God. There will be no abandonment of the lost, as aforetime English criminals were turned loose in Norfolk Island.' 'And yet,' the Bishop continues, 'is not this just what we have believed that there is? Such is often the baseless assumption of those who think that they honour God's word by depicting Hell as a place where sinners grow worse and worse, corrupting and being corrupted, alike the victims and the sport of devils. There are those who think that they thus honour God. Alas! they do Him the foulest dishonour and wrong. The silence of Scripture sternly forbids such a travesty of the Divine judgments.'[1]

[1] Bishop Bickersteth's *Primary Visitation Charge*, p. 86 sq.

And surely S. John's vision tells the same story. He sees the condemned 'tormented in the presence of the Lamb,' not by His absence. Such absence would be no torment at all to those who had lived without Him all their lives. The presence of the Lamb is the punishment of the lost. It constitutes the inevitable, eternal torment of moral contrast; of contrast between the 'beast' and the 'Lamb'; between the 'beast' and all that is base and bestial, all that is black and ugly, and the 'Lamb' and all that is good and Godlike, all that is white and cleanly.

But this 'presence' is not for them the sight of the Beatific Vision: this, they lack the capacity to see. In this sense, it is revealed, the lost are shut off from God. Wilfully, and of full intent, they have shut themselves off from Him all their lives: dying has worked no magic charm in their characters; for them 'the door' to the Beatific Vision 'is shut.' Though not outside the government of the city, they are, to continue the metaphor, outside the Celestial City itself: they are excluded from what the earthly Canaan meant to the Jews, from what the Heavenly City represents to us. 'There is a banishment of the lost from the Beatific Vision of God, and exclusion from the inheritance of the Saints in light, and a being cast into the outer

darkness'—a darkness constituted simply by the loss of the Beatific Vision. No earthly symbol—though it is but a symbol—could better express their remorse than the Bible figure of 'weeping and gnashing of teeth.'[1] The punishment is one which they have of their own free will brought upon themselves. It is the necessary and logical result of the 'wrath of the Lamb,' of the justice in love, of the love in justice.

But it is the wrath of the 'Lamb.' It is not the punishment of being left either to the uncontrolled tyranny of an omnipotent devil in a material fire-lake, or to the unbridled tortures of their own lusts and mutual hatred. Their punishment compels and enforces every one of them, 'every tongue' of every soul, to confess what the saved lovingly and freely confess 'that Jesus Christ' (and not Satan) is 'Lord.' Is there anything unscriptural in such a view? We think not.

'To say that this view, or any other view, explains the difficulty is as absurd as it is unnecessary.' We have had no such full open vision of Hell as we have had of Heaven.[2] All that we can say is that 'Scripture reveals two parallel lines of truth. They are equally the revelation of God. Whether

[1] Bishop Bickersteth.
[2] Rev. xxi., xxii.

we can harmonise them or not, there must be a profound Divine harmony in them. On the one hand, it is clearly revealed that there is for some, whoever they may be, an eternity of punishment, whatever that may be, in Hell, wherever or whatever that may be. On the other hand we can see no Scriptural warrant whatever for the view of those who depict Hell as a scene of eternal rebellion and defiant blasphemy. Against such, we must affirm that the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil, and He must reign till He hath put all things under His feet, and that God, who is love and delights in mercy, will never deny Himself even to the most wretched and ruined of His creatures; for of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.'[1]

How little we really understand! We are students, mere students, students of the Unknown. But:—

God is His own Interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

[1] Bishop Bickersteth.

CHAPTER XVIII

IMMORTALITY AND HEAVEN

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Pater noster, qui es in cælis.

Where and what is Heaven? We may treat the answer to the question under three views—the Mental View, the Pictorial View, the Social View.

I.

The Mental View. We have seen that popular conceptions are, as a rule, full of difficulties. The popular conception of Heaven forms no exception to the rule. It is so material, or so dreamy; so literal, or so mystical. In a word, it is so unscriptural that it at once plunges us into a sea of elementary difficulties. Heaven is, popularly speaking, a definite and local spot in space, 'up there,' whither our Lord went in His risen Body, and beyond which therefore He did not go. And here, at once, we are met by the primary difficulties of localising a spiritual body, of mixing in thought

the spiritual and the material, of apparently confining our Blessed Lord to some one locality in the unseen universe.

Nor is this conception merely a popular one. Bishop Pearson does not make the difficulty less when he says: 'I am fully persuaded that the only begotten and eternal Son of God . . . did . . . by a true and local translation convey Himself from the earth on which He lived, through all the regions of air, through all the celestial orbs, until He came unto the Heaven of Heavens, the most glorious Presence of the Majesty of God.'[1] Does not this language seem, as Bishop Harvey Goodwin says, open to reasonable exception? 'The phrase "true and local translation," followed by the expressions "through all the regions of the air and through all the celestial orbs," culminating in the words "until He came unto the Heaven of Heavens, the most glorious Presence of the Majesty of God," implies too much of material conception to be freely accepted in days which are as familiar with the laws of matter as our own. The notion of transition through regions of air may be interpreted poetically, but it is only upon this poetical hypothesis that the propriety of the language can be defended. There is

[1] Pearson on the *Creed*, Art. vi.

an impassable gulf between words which speak of local translation through regions of air and those which speak of that sublime, immaterial, spiritual reality of the most glorious Presence of God.'[1]

We must, of course, guard against the belief that our Lord's Manhood is ubiquitous. This, we may suppose, was what Dr. Pusey meant when, following the Schoolmen in distinguishing the natural Presence of Christ in Heaven from His spiritual Presence in the Eucharist, he wrote to the Bishop of London: 'It is a matter of faith that the natural Body of our Lord is at the right hand of God circumscribed in place.' It is 'in a certain place of Heaven,' says S. Augustine, 'on account of the mode of a true Body.'[2] And on the other hand, we must guard against the belief that God dwells in some far-off point of space. As Principal Caird puts it: 'God is here, above, beneath, around us.' The limitations of language make fresh difficulties at every turn, and if we are asked why we use such language at all, our excuse must be, as Bishop Gore says, that we have 'no celestial language' at our disposal, and that to speak of Heaven at all, we must speak of it in earthly language. 'The forms under which we

[1] *The Foundations of the Creed*, p. 204.
[2] *Letter to the Bishop of London*, 1851, Sect. III.

picture to ourselves this higher reality are necessarily those of space and time. . . . The great fact on which our faith rests, the reality of the supersensual world, is objectively real, but the forms under which we picture it to ourselves are necessarily imperfect.'[1]

In using the very word 'Heaven,' we are, indeed, running a risk of misconception. Scripture speaks of a plurality of Heavens rather than of a Heaven. The Bible conception is of many Heavens, rather than of one Heaven. Literally speaking, the Lord's Prayer begins with the clause, 'Our Father which art in the Heavens.' It is into 'the Heavens' that the Creeds[2] assert our Lord ascended; it is in 'the Heavens' (those 'many abodes,' or 'dwelling-places,' or 'mansions,') that the Divine Session is being accomplished. Christ is not revealed to us as 'sitting at the right hand of the Father' in any one local spot to the exclusion of any other spot; but as being in His Spiritual Body in the Spiritual realm—a realm which He Himself tells us consists, not of any one local habitation but, of various spheres of being.[3]

When we say in the Creed 'He ascended into

[1] W. R. Inge, *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 192.

[2] But the Nicene, or 'Constantinopolitan' Creed, as said in the mediæval English Church, has '*Et ascendit in Cælum.*'

[3] Cf. S. John xiv. 2.

Heaven,' and think of the Ascension as a physical act, we must remember that Christ lived under two conditions of bodily being. He had a natural body under natural laws, and a spiritual body under spiritual laws.[1] Of these spiritual laws and of His spiritual Body we know but very little. What we do know reveals to us what the Ascension cannot mean rather than all that it does mean.

But we cannot help asking: What does our Lord's Ascension into Heaven imply?

'Let us observe first,' writes one,[2] in a deeply interesting address, 'that it cannot mean the same for us that it meant for the faithful of the first age. Our cosmography, our conception of the physical universe and its constitution is so different from theirs that we cannot relate phenomena in the same way.

'Let us put ourselves in the place of a believer of the first age; let us try to realise the physical significance of the Ascension for him. He imagines a human body, having gravity and normal dimensions, rising from the earth in an upward flight to an immense distance through sphere after sphere, to the height of heights. But where is this limit? If he

[1] See *Our Lord's Resurrection*, W. J. Sparrow Simpson, Oxford Library of Practical Theology, chap. viii., and *The Appearances of our Lord after the Passion*, H. B. Swete.

[2] T. A. Lacey, *Sermon on the Ascension of our Lord.*

impose an artificial measure, is there no height beyond? If he give this contradiction the go-by, he has to suppose the human body located in one spot in the circumference of an enormous sphere. Is this a simple, intelligible, rational, mental image? No, indeed. Men could hold it only by tacitly suppressing its difficulties. Dante maps out the Ptolemaic Cosmos with minute accuracy, but he could bring it within the compass of practical imagination only by ignoring the measures of distance. We no longer think of Heaven as having a physical relation to the earth—a relation of distance and direction. We retain the old terms just as we speak of the sunrise, but with a new physical significance. We no longer think of the Ascension as an upward flight of ponderable matter. Such a movement would have no meaning except in relation to this small planet on which we live; it would have no cosmic significance at all. We see the body of Jesus issuing from the sepulchre, with identity complete, and yet physically changed, existing under new conditions of which we have only the most imperfect apprehension. The evidence is sufficient for the fact, but wholly insufficient for any scientific explanation of the fact.'

It helps us to get rid of a terrible sense of deprivation when we realise that the absence of our Lord

from earth is not the absence of distance, as we count distance, or that His presence in Heaven is absence by a measurable distance from earth. When we speak of Him as 'up there,' or 'above the bright blue sky,' we do so—and Scripture justifies us in doing so—in the best words we can find. But, what do we mean by 'up there,' or by 'above'? 'Surely, not overhead,' replies Bishop Lightfoot. 'What is above us now will be on a level, will sink below us, a few hours hence as the earth revolves on its axis. What is above us at this very moment is beneath the feet of our Australian fellow-disciples of Christ. God dwelleth in the Heavens. What do we mean by "the Heavens"? Not surely the skies. God can no more dwell in the skies than He can dwell on this solid earth, than He can dwell in the restless ocean. Strain your eyes and rack your thoughts as you will to find the place of His abode, and your brain will only grow giddy in vain. Attempt to reckon the myriads upon myriads of miles which separate you from that faint star barely discerned through the most powerful telescope, that star from which the very ray of light, now striking the reflector, was darted centuries before the human race existed on this earth. Have you arrived one whit nearer the abode, the Court, the throne of God, by all this

tension of your senses, by all this play of your imagination? Nay! this heaven, this sky overhead in its purity, its calm, its glory, its spaciousness, is only an image—a sublime image indeed, but an image still—of an infinitude which we cannot describe, cannot realise. But the abode of God!—why the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. When the Apostle described Him as "dwelling in the light unapproachable," we picture to ourselves such a radiancy as Dante has described, or Angelico has painted. We are obliged to sustain our imagination by such aids. But here, too, light is only a figure. . . . Would we really describe the dwelling-place of God? Then let us adopt the prophet's description, "The high and holy one that inhabiteth Eternity." A cross metaphor, it will be said: time and space are confused. Yes! but herein consists the sublimity and power of the image. God has no place but Eternity.'[1]

Can we, with our present knowledge, get beyond this? Old and child-taught beliefs may have to be surrendered or rather revised; but in reality to our great and endless comfort. 'No doubt,' says Dr. Inge,[2] 'advancing knowledge has helped to shatter

[1] *Sermons in St. Paul's Cathedral*, chap. xi., p. 161.
[2] *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 189.

some of the old symbols—for example, those of a geographical heaven above our heads, and a geographical hell beneath our feet; but every disillusionment of this kind has been accomplished by a *heightening* of the idea of the Eternal World. The hopes of civilised man, if less gorgeous, are much more exalted than those of the barbarian. They embody the unrealised complement of a spiritual experience which makes ever higher demands upon life as its meaning gradually unfolds itself in history, science, and thought.'

And if you still ask of the Ascension, as Bishop Lightfoot asks, 'Does not this suppose some locality?' his answer again seems as far as we can get. 'Why should you expect to understand it? Is your understanding all-powerful? Do you understand how it is that while your body is fixed on this one spot, your mind is traversing all space and all time, soaring into heaven beyond Arcturus and the Pleiades, piercing into the remote past when this Earth was peopled with strange monsters, plesiosauri, and pterodactyles, and labyrinthodons? This is a fact. And if this be possible, can you not conceive it possible also, that the humanity of Christ—with all the limitations which it implies—may be brought into close proximity, may, in some serious way, be placed in

the position of unique honour in relation to the Illimitable, Infinite, Eternal Father, such as is represented to us in a figure, in a parable, by sitting at the right hand of God.'[1] Thus far, and no further, can the mental view of Heaven take us.

II.

Next, the Pictorial View. We can but express heavenly wonders in human words. But such words contain a truth which, while they repel no one's reason, are meant to inflame each one's imagination. The word-painting in inspired pictures appeals to that most wonderful, and yet most dangerous, faculty, the imagination.

Much of the Bible is an appeal to the consecrated imagination. It is, as it were, a formal permission to us to exercise our imagination on the highest, a command not to let the flight of the imagination stop short of Heaven. And considering the part played by imagination in earthly things, we are not surprised that Revelation should make use of it in metaphor, in figure, in picture, in parable, to describe to us something of heavenly things. Imagination, we may remember, is much more than the mere play of fancy. It looks beneath the out-

[1] *Sermons in St. Paul's Cathedral*, chap. xi.

ward into the inward. Ruskin says, that 'fancy sees the outside: imagination sees the heart and inner nature. It, the imagination, never stops at crusts or ashes, or outward images of any kind—it puts them all aside and plunges into the very central fiery heart . . . it gets within all fence, cuts down to the root, and drinks the very sap of that which it deals with.'[1] It is this 'inner gaze,' this 'central fiery heart' which the imagination brings into play when exercising itself upon Heaven.

We may exercise it thus on pictures of Heaven as they are painted in the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Creed.

The Old Testament's appeal to the imagination suggests those 'wonders among the dead' which begin in *Sheol*, 'the house of the assembly of all living,' the intermediate state,[2] and are a foretaste of the greater wonders of Heaven itself. 'Dost thou show wonders among the dead?' asks the Psalmist. Imagine the wealth of beauty a full answer might contain. Imagine an angel, some Raphael or Gabriel, guiding the soul round the wonderland of the world to come. What a vision of marvels would be revealed! It is at least not unsafe to imagine that the first wonder, the wonder of all wonders,

[1] *Modern Painters*, vol ii. p. 233. [2] Ps. lxxxviii. 10.

would be the 'Form of the Son of God'—'God of the Substance of His Father before all worlds,' 'Man of the substance of His Mother born in the world,' God 'incarnate by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.' That first. 'They shall see His Face'—that Face which painters have tried, and failed, to picture through their imaginative faculties. How painfully short of reality all such human imaginations come! Few painters can produce even their own conceptions on canvas; and if they do, few eyes can see the conception as the artist conceived it. Think what it will be for the first time to see face to face the Visible Head of the Visible Church, where the Church is seen in the visible unity of promised oneness. Other wonders there may, and will be; but, just as the great golden Pagoda of Rangoon so dominates the whole country that it has been said 'Rangoon is nothing, the Pagoda is all'; so it will be seen that Heaven is nothing; that God is all.

Imagine, too, the sight of Her whom the Church has not shrunk from calling *θεοτόκος*,[1] Mother of

[1] 'Forasmuch as they who endeavour to make void the preaching of the truth have by their particular heresies given rise to vain babblings. Some . . . *refusing to the Virgin the appellation of Theotocos* . . . therefore the holy, great, and Œcumenical Synod . . . has . . . decreed that the faith of the three hundred and eighteen Holy Fathers should remain free from assault.'—Definition of the Faith

God, *Mater dolorosa*, *Mater misericordiæ*, *Mater purissima*. Or imagine the sight of a really 'just man'—have we ever seen one?—like S. Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus.

Or, again, imagine the wonder of self-recognition. How strange it will be to see ourselves as we really are; to see ourselves (if, through His merits, counted worthy) clothed in those 'white robes' of self-recognition whereby we shall see ourselves white by the power of many a past and whitening Sacrament. Imagine, too, the vision of others 'clothed upon' in their raiment of pure transparent white—'seen through,' seen just as they really are, and seen in all the glory of His communicated perfections. How shall even the imagination picture the 'wonders among the dead,' as they live in the light of the 'Light of the World':—wonders of intellectual attainment; wonders of memory and brain and will; wonders of expanded affections and enlarged powers of adoration, thanksgiving and meditation; wonders of tireless ability for work and rest? How shall it grasp the wonders of perfect harmony—each soul complete in itself and yet none complete without the other, all blend-

agreed upon at the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, and re-affirmed by Lambeth Conference 1867. See Bright's *Canons of the First Four Councils*, pp. iv and 85.

ing in perfect proportion, each independent, and yet all interdependent, each in his own place, and all together advancing in the path of everlasting progress? What wonder is there like the wonder of eternal progress and perfection, which will ever be the law of our lives—for perfection is a state of eternal progress, rather than of completed attainment? It is the finite 'ever dipping deeper and deeper into the deep deep depths of the Infinite Being of Eternal love.'

One vision indeed no imagination can picture on earth:—the sight of the Holy Three, the 'Beatific Vision.' That indeed fails us here; that is for the 'Heavenlies.' Imagination, like any other faculty, or like all our faculties together, fails to guess what this will be like. In this, as in so many other things, we are as yet but students of the Unknown.

The New Testament appeals yet more vividly to our imaginative faculties. Scene after scene, towards the close of Revelation, discloses to us pictures—only pictures, but pictures of corresponding realities—of Heaven. As by some old master, the 'New Jerusalem' is painted by one who has seen what he paints, and paints what he has seen.[1]

[1] Rev. xxi. *sq.*

And the picture suggests a possibility. May it not mean this? Heaven is the transfiguration of the familiar. The 'New Jerusalem' suggests the old Jerusalem—so familiar; so dear; so human with its streets; so divine with its universal Temple. To every Jew it would picture the 'happy home' he would live for, fight for, die for, with all the fury of a combined love and patriotism.

Here is the picture. 'And I John saw the holy City, New Jerusalem coming down from Heaven.'[1] It is the transfigured image of the old City with its familiar streets, and towers, and walls, and gates, and rivers, and fountains, and hills, and trees, and buildings, and masons, and measuring lines, and gems, and jewels. It is still his 'dear dear Jerusalem'; new, but somehow familiar. It is the old earthly Jerusalem, but Jerusalem 'come down from Heaven'—cleansed, purified, transformed. It is 'the Holy City' now, because its citizens are holy. 'The former things,' which hindered and impeded spiritual progress, 'are passed away.' There is 'no more death,' for the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death'; there is no more sorrow, for there is no more sin, and sin is the only thing really worth sorrowing for; there are no more tears, for there is nothing to cry about; no more

[1] Rev. xxi. 2.

pain, for the healing leaves of the Tree of life have healed sin's deadly hurt.

And there are the old streets.[1] They are new streets now; 'streets of gold'—no longer telling of poverty, and squalor, and struggling; no longer picturing slums, and dens, and sweating-houses. And there are the old City walls.[2] They are new walls now; walls no longer falling before the conquering legions of a hated Caesar, but secure from every foe—fitting picture of a spiritual assurance which nothing can shake. And there are 'the gates of the City,'[3]—those old historic Gates which, could they talk, might tell such grim stories of siege and slaughter. But they are new gates now, each one cut out of a lovely, single, pearl:—and so safe will be the souls of the Heavenly Citizens, that 'the gates thereof shall not be shut at all by day, and there shall be no night there,'[4] but day all the year round.

> No more the foe can harm,
> No more of leaguer'd camp,
> And cry of night alarm,
> And need of ready lamp.

And there, too, are the old faces. 'I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number.'[5]

[1] Rev. xxi. 21.
[2] Rev. xxi. 12.
[3] Rev. xxi. 21.
[4] Rev. xxi. 25.
[5] Rev. vii. 9.

As they pass in white procession before the eyes of the Seer, there is many a face he knows, many an old 'child in the faith,' many a fellow-soldier: and yet somehow the old faces are new faces, faces with all signs of the old Jerusalem life cleared away; old and yet new; familiar and yet fresh. And so the picture unfolds itself, in ever increasing beauty and mysticism—only a picture, but the picture of a fact.

One thing, indeed, the Seer fails to see. 'And I saw no Temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.'[1] Heaven is at one in itself. It is all Temple where God is all in all. 'They shall see His Face,' not intermittently, but always and for ever. No need for stated 'times and seasons there'; no need for special places of worship there. It is not that there will be no worship, no music, no ritual, no liturgy. Every picture gives a hint of all such realities; of the four and twenty elders prostrating themselves in adoration; of harpers harping with their harps in Heavenly orchestra; of the *Amen*, *Alleluia* which is 'the liturgy of Heaven.' As they work they worship, and as they worship they work. Here at least *Laborare est orare* and *Orare est laborare* are both true.

[1] Rev. xxi. 22.

Such is a bare outline of the picture. It is all pictorial, all figurative, all metaphor, all an appeal to our God-given imaginations; but it is God-painted; it stands for a reality, whatever that reality may be.

The Creed tells the same story. Here is the picture. 'He sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.' It is a picture, a speaking, living, glorious picture, containing a tremendous truth, but a picture. It is an appeal to the inspired imagination. 'We are dealing with a metaphor' is Bishop Lightfoot's comment on the clause; 'God has neither hands nor feet; with God is neither right nor left. It would be blasphemy to think otherwise of Him. Nay, S. Paul says that we ourselves—you and I—by virtue of our Baptism have been already "seated together with Christ in the Heavenly places," have been enthroned already where Christ is enthroned. This is an obvious metaphor. And why, then, should we press the words in the other case as if they described some visible scene with Christ sitting on the right hand of God? We recall the Court of some earthly sovereign, where the heir apparent holds the place of honour nearest the throne; and we picture to ourselves some far off celestial place, with its rainbow hues, its starry

glories, where such a scene is enacted, only with a brilliancy intensified a thousandfold. We have in our mind's eye, perhaps, the reproduction of some famous painter who has described on canvas the Session of the Son in glory. And yet, with strange inconsistency, when the painter attempts to portray the Eternal Father, our mind recoils with horror. We shudder at the profanity; we avert our gaze. Our repulsion, our horror, is a silent witness to us that the scene cannot be localised, cannot be portrayed.'[1] It is a picture, a celestial picture, a true picture. As such, it naturally finds a place in the Creed of a Church which appeals to all our faculties, and meets the needs of each part of our being, and it has a meaning deep and true. Whatever tells of highest honour, whatever pictures loftiest position, whatever symbolises greatest reward, whatever speaks of 'joy beyond all joys,' such things picture, however feebly, the Session of Him who, in a oneness we cannot comprehend, 'sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.'

III.

The Social View. Life in Heaven will be related life. Our place will not be independent of the places of others. The New Jerusalem is a City, and city

[1] *Sermons in St. Paul's Cathedral*, chap. xi., p. 160.

life is social life. The Communion of Saints implies their relationship to each other. To each it is said, 'I go to prepare a place for you'—and each place will be related to all other places. In early days a painter never thought of his picture as upon a single easel, or hanging solitary in a gallery. He thought of it in relation to the appointed place for which it was destined: his first thought was of the prepared place which it was eventually to occupy. So 'the prepared place' is waiting for each of us, waiting till we are finished pictures ready to occupy it in perfect harmony with the rest of the Celestial Citizens. As in some new cathedral, the artist with a free hand will plan out the windows for the whole building, assign to each its prepared place in relation to the rest, so will it be with the soul. As each window is perfect and complete in itself, though only because it is duly related to the whole scheme, so will each soul be perfect and complete, and completely and perfectly related to the whole. The Heavenly Citizens live in the realised joy of related life, in the perfected happiness of the Communion of Saints.

So, too, the picture, or parable, of 'the harpers harping with their harps'[1] suggests the harmony of related life. Each harp is in perfect tune with the

[1] Rev. xiv. 2.

other harps. It is no picture of a lonely harper playing on a solitary harp, but of each using his harp so as to take his place in the full chorus. Each has a prepared place in the orchestra, and on the perfection of each depends the perfection of all. Händel dealt with large orchestras, violins, bassoons, violoncellos, harpsichords, oboes, flutes, side drums, organ: but it was upon the perfection of each individual instrument and performer that the perfection of the whole orchestra depended. Each had its own prepared place in relation to all the others, and all the others in relation to the unit. So it is said of the Cherubim, 'They cry one to another.' Each cries in ordered harmony, the full cry making the perfect music.

And the prepared place is no dull, fixed, stationary place as we count place. Whatever the word place implies, it involves progress. 'In my Father's house are many mansions'—mansions for each, mansions for all. 'They shall go from strength to strength,' and the strength of one attainment will lift us up to the attainment of another. The prepared place will suit the prepared soul. Every soul (no longer blighted by the sadness now connected with the words) will go 'to his own place,' each progressing from strength to strength in unimpeded growth.

Sir Henry Acland, in his well-known lecture on *Medical Missions in their Relation to Oxford*,[1] quotes two interesting passages which sum up the two views of Heaven pictured by religion and science. 'I quote,' he says, 'the sentiments of a remarkable passage in the writings of one of our older divines, on what may be the future life and occupation of those that have crossed the valley of the shadow of death, and are able to contemplate with the new powers, of which at present we personally know nothing, but by imagination and hope. He says that he contemplates innumerable multitudes of pure and happy creatures inhabiting and replenishing ample and spacious regions above; ignorant of nothing that is good and pleasant to be known, curious to know nothing that is useless; endowed with a self-governing wisdom yet with a noble freedom; all everywhere full of good, full of reverence and dutiful love, every one in his own eyes as nothing, self-consistent, even free of all self-displeasure; all assured of their existence with God, all counting each other's felicity their own, and every one's enjoyment multiplied so many thousandfold as he apprehends every one to be perfectly pleased and happy like himself.' This is one

[1] *Medical Missions in their Relation to Oxford* (1899), pp. 56-59.

picture. 'Another picture,' he continues, 'was drawn by one of the chief scientific men of the present century, Faraday. I was travelling alone with him in a railway carriage on our way to Newcastle, when we were about to arrange, in the year 1850, a new system of medical examination for Durham University. We had had some earnest conversation in the direction of what I have just now quoted, and as we approached York Minster I said to Mr. Faraday: "After we reach York we may be no longer alone in the carriage. Will you answer me one question? What do you think will be your occupation in a future life?" The great scientific man quickly turned upon me with his eagle eyes, the wonder of all who saw them, and thrice clasping his hands with energy called out: "'Eye hath not seen! nor ear heard! neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.' I shall be with Christ, that is enough for me." Thus were the faith and love of the Christian soul united in the mind of this foremost man of science.' Such are the thoughts of two great thinkers on the subject. Once more we ask: Can we get further than this in our present state of studentship?

It has been said that 'insatiable curiosity, ever

gratified but never quenched, is the law of the heavenly life' itself. May it not be so?

And so we end, as we began, with a question: not in any doubt as to any revealed truth; not in any disloyalty to aught which the undivided Church has made a pronouncement upon; but in other respects as humble students of the Unknown. 'Thus may we hope to reach out further and ever further into the Unknown; sure that as we grope in the darkness, we shall encounter no clammy horror, but shall receive an assistance and sympathy which it is legitimate to symbolise as a clasp from the hand of Christ Himself.'[1]

[1] Sir Oliver Lodge, *Hibbert Journal*, April 1908, p. 585.

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